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Katrina – the politics of a natural disaster

Harry der Nederlanden

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath will be with us for a long time – not just in terms of resettling hundreds of thousands of people and rebuilding numerous cities, towns and villages in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama but also in terms of public inquiries into why the response was so sluggish and disorganized. More heads will roll, and perhaps one of the heads will be that of George Bush. The hurricane, the disaster and the disastrous failure of rescue efforts were all politicized from the beginning.

But that's part of reality. Katrina was not just a natural disaster. Such disasters expose man-made fault lines, and those fault lines are there because of history and because of political decisions. Many fault lines are the result of years of mistaken or mismanaged policies. Others are social facts that are always present, such as the fact that the poor, the frail and the helpless are always the ones hardest hit in a disaster, and, as Katrina demonstrated, they are often the ones left behind because they have no place to go.

Most of us are by now sated with pictures and stories of Katrina, so I won't try to give an overview of all that happened. I did find it informative to look at some of the different political issues raised by the hurricane and its after-effects.

Most anticipated natural disaster in history

Katrina was a political as well as a natural hurricane well before

it hit the U.S. coast. A columnist in the *Boston Globe* suggested that the real name of this hurricane was not Katrina but "Global Warming," and numerous others linked the frequency and intensity of hurricanes to Bush's failure to sign the Kyoto accord to curtail greenhouse gases.

That was mostly political gas. There's no evidence that global warming has increased the number of hurricanes, according to scientists. And even if the U.S. and all those who signed the Kyoto accord had met all their goals (few did), it would have made no appreciable difference this season. It will take decades to reverse that process.

Before Katrina tested the levee system around New Orleans, journalists dug up decades of studies and debates about the Mississippi delta, levee construction and the deterioration of the coastal wetlands around the city. In the week prior to the disaster, the city's *Times-Picayune* published a series of six articles describing, among other things, what a strength three hurricane would do to the levees and the city. David Brooks of the *New York Times* wrote: "Katrina was the most anticipated natural disaster in history, and still government managed to fail at every level." A couple of years ago officials from all level of government had seen a powerpoint presentation of a computer model that simulated a strength three hurricane hitting the city. It showed that the levees would not



withstand the assault. Officials seemed to take the model with a grain of salt, said the professor who designed it. In 2002, a Red Cross official predicted between 25,000 and 100,000 people would die in a major storm.

Environmentalists took the threatening hurricane as an occasion to rail at the authorities for failing to stop the accelerating deterioration of the coast and the

wetlands that once acted as a buffer between the Gulf and the city of New Orleans. Others blamed the government for diverting funds from levee reinforcement to the war in Iraq, and still others fumed about the folly of trying to contain the Mississippi River too much and allowing people to build where they shouldn't. Although engineers have known about the inadequacy of the levee system

for decades, more and more people were allowed to settle in a bowl that is several feet below sea-level beside a huge lake that is several feet above sea-level. As everyone has been saying for years, it was a disaster waiting to happen.

Again politics played a role. Yes, funding was decreased over the last few years, but some of the work had also been halted

Continued on page 2...

Intelligent Design wins increasing support in the U.S.

Peter C Glover

Two-thirds of Americans, if a new survey is to be believed, agree with President Bush's call to teach Intelligent Design in schools alongside evolutionary theory. In fact, they go further, being happy for full-blown creationism taught in schools.

But while President Bush's recent comments on the subject related to his belief that Intelligent Design (ID), the assertion that the cosmos was made by a 'supreme being' without identifying who that supreme being is, this new survey appears to reveal that up to two-thirds of Americans would be happy for full creationism, to be taught.

So what is the difference between creationism vs ID? The average Canadian and Canadian Christian might still feel a little uncertain of the essential difference between the doctrines of creationism and Intelligent Design. The short explanation is that where creationism identifies the God of the Judeo-Christian Bible as the Creator God of the cosmos, ID stops short by asserting that empirical scientific study alone makes out the case identifying clear evidence for 'design' and thus for a designer.

Explaining design

Michael Behe is the author of the bestselling *Darwin's Black*

Box: *The Biochemical Challenge to*

Evolution and professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania. Behe is at the forefront of a burgeoning phalanx of scientists behind the case for serious scientific debate over the case for ID. In a recent interview he asserts "The question is: exactly how did life get here? Was it by natural selection and random mutation or was it something else? You see this design when you see co-ordinated parts coming together to perform function – like in a hand. And so it's the appearance of design that See *Intelligent Design* p. 2...



News

because of a disagreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and environmentalists. What was to have priority – recovery of the wetlands or strengthening the levees? Other commentators pointed out that over the years Louisiana has been very good at getting federal funding. The trouble is that much of it didn't go where it was supposed to. It got dispersed into all kinds of pork-barrel projects that benefited the friends of those in power. So government, on the local level too, failed the people of New Orleans long before Katrina tested the readiness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Race and poverty exposed

As the highways out of New Orleans became clogged with those evacuating the city, television reporters circulated among the stalled traffic to raise complaints about a lack of evacuation plans. Actually, said David Brooks, the plans looked quite good – on paper. But it's one thing to put a plan on paper and another to implement it. The plan called for the use of buses to evacuate those without transportation and also for staging areas stocked with food and water.

As the storm passed, in fact while the tail end was still lashing the city, the looting began, triggering charges centering around race and poverty. These are fault lines present all over the country, all over the world. But as pictures appeared on television of blacks looting stores and people expressed horror at the breakdown of civilized behavior, some charged that the news coverage was racist, designed to make blacks look like criminals. These were mostly people scavenging for diapers and food and water.

Other journalists trotted out figures to show that such behavior should have been anticipated in a city with a crime rate ten times the national average, which has more murders per capita than New York City, and which is known for its corruption. Others focused on the deep-seated poverty of the city, where most lived below the poverty line and one-third were on welfare. According to columnist



George F. Will some 80 percent of children born to black women in New Orleans don't have fathers – a recipe for social disaster.

T.V. newsman Tim Russert talked as if all the whites were wealthy and, armed with credit cards, could hop in their SUVs and leave, while the blacks of New Orleans were left behind. Actually, the huge majority of those who got out in time were black. The evacuation was more efficient than expected, for 80 percent of the people left the city. Previous estimates had been that 35-40 percent of the people might not leave, either because they could not or would not.

While some used the obvious disparity to scold the Bush administration for not doing more for blacks and poor people, others lamented that the welfare state had created an entire class of people unable to fend for themselves. "When people rob, steal and kill their fellow neighbors for a pile of rotten porridge, it is because people have forgotten God. The frontal lobotomy that caused this destructive memory loss and moral failure was performed by the cabal known as the self-appointed intellectual elite of the mass media and liberal, humanist academia," ranted Dr. Ted Baehr, of *Movieguide*, an evangelical movie review magazine.

As reports about the anarchy multiplied, some said it was only people in search of diapers, food and water. But, although some of the reports of violence appear exaggerated, it is clear that those looting electronic equipment, jewelry and high-priced clothing stores were not in search of

diapers. As the looting spread, people who had sought refuge in the Super Dome returned to the city to join in the orgy of lawlessness. How one reported the anarchy depended, it seems, very much on one's political affiliation.

Mobilizing bodies and buses

From Tuesday to Thursday, when the often promised National Guard and buses finally began to arrive in large numbers, all eyes were on the Super Dome and the Convention Center, where people were languishing without enough food and water, amidst violence and barbarism. All around the country and around the world, people were asking how could this happen in America?

When officials, whether local, state, federal or military, were questioned by reporters, they always had ready answers – either it was the duty of some other level of government or some other agency or they had already ordered hundreds of buses, hundreds of trucks carrying ready-to-eat meals and water, 10,000 National Guard troops, etc. But to those waiting before the T.V. cameras in flooded New Orleans, nothing seemed to be happening. Nor, some grumbled, did they do much to improve conditions for themselves, choosing instead to complain bitterly to reporters about the filth in Convention restrooms.

Louisiana state governor Kathleen Blanco scrambled to mobilize buses from other parishes, but officials there were not eager to volunteer their school buses, and the drivers (most of them women) refused to drive, scared

off by the stories of rape and violence. By the time Blanco signed the orders authorizing the National Guard to commandeer school and municipal buses, over 150 school buses parked one mile from the Super Dome were already sitting in over five feet of water.

People appeared on camera to denounce the federal government for doing nothing "because Bush doesn't care about poor and black people," forgetting that hurricane Katrina struck hardest in Mississippi, where most of those stricken were white. Help didn't arrive there any sooner than in New Orleans, where the cameras were rolling.

After the evacuation from the Super Dome and Convention Center was completed, the media seemed to make a concerted effort to focus on the tremendous outpouring of help for the refugees. Between 800,000 and one million people have been made homeless by the hurricane. To help and resettle such numbers will put a huge strain on the U.S. economy for many months. Some will never be able to return to their former homes. Many have lost their jobs and businesses.

For some in government, the first priority seems to be the political one of affixing blame in anticipation of

the next election. Reconstructing lives, the communities, levees and the Louisiana shoreline, cleaning up the environment and plugging all those people back into the economy will be a huge task, and it will require political action at every step and at every level. But that politics will have to be less polarized and less partisan than it has been in recent years.

There are signs of hope. When the refugees transferred to the Astrodome in Houston were asked who wanted to move into the cruise ships provided for housing, almost no one wanted to go. They had no desire to move into a luxury cruise ship, they said, they wanted to get close to their families, they wanted to get settled and find jobs so they could support themselves. That strikes me as a healthy desire – although it will be difficult for the government to fulfill that desire. The kind of response that big government has been able to muster to this point does not inspire confidence.

The fact that churches all across America have been converted into help centers is another sign of hope. Helping these thousands of refugees will not be an easy chore, however. They've been uprooted, experienced trauma, feel victimized and lost. They are as likely to be angry as grateful. Those churches providing help will have to pray for a lot of patience as well as material resources.

Intelligent Design ... continued from p. 1

everybody's trying to explain. So that if Darwin's theory doesn't explain it we're left with no other explanation than maybe it really was designed. That's essentially the design argument."

Pursued about the faith element Behe brings with him (odd that Christians are reluctant to introduce the same worldview issues when tackling the atheistic worldview and assumptions!) Behe confirms his Catholic beliefs and that the ID case does not predicate God in any form whatsoever – even suggesting that the designer could be "some kind of evil alien." Behe answers, "That's exactly right. All that the evidence from biochemistry points to is some very intelligent agent. Although I find it congenial to think it's God, others might prefer to think it's an alien – or who knows? We focus simply

on the observation of design. We don't say the designer is God."

Some Christians might feel uncomfortable with this believing that the ID case doesn't go far enough. But the fact is that ID does at least provide the Christian argument with a serious scientific case to at least introduce the principle of design and thus designer into the argument without relying on the argument of faith alone. In any event however, at least in the USA, it appears that the fact of widespread belief in a Creator who is the God of the Bible is a reasonable enough argument per se to allow it to be taught in schools. The poll confirms that even those who specifically do not believe in an intelligent design source took this view.

The survey's findings

This latest survey of American

Politics

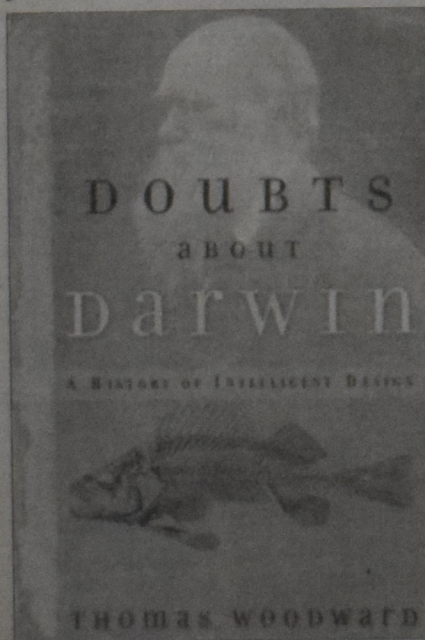
attitudes to religion among the leading political parties is fascinating and even forced its way onto the pages of the pages of the liberal New York Times recently. A paper which has been in the vanguard against the president's intervention on the subject.

Both right and left approve ID

Most strikingly, however, what the survey reveals is that the intelligent design vs evolution education debate does not break down along purely Republican vs Democrat lines as had been thought. In fact it appears to reveal that two-thirds of all Americans, left or right on the political spectrum, would be happy to see creationism, not just Intelligent Design, added to the schools curriculum in the USA.

The poll, conducted from 2,000 people in mid-July by the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, published on August 31, 2005, found that 42 percent of respondents held strict creationist views. These agreed that "living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time." 48 percent however claimed to believe that humans had evolved over time. But of that number 18 percent said that evolution was "guided by a supreme being." In all 64 percent said they were open to the idea of teaching creationism in addition to evolution.

Interestingly, more of those who expressed a belief in creationism said they "very certain" of their views (63 percent), compared with those who believe in evolution (32 percent).



Public safety not to be taken for granted

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina's destruction of New Orleans and the resulting loss of life, people are tempted to point fingers. Some of this will be motivated by the contemporary expectation that government should intervene to prevent a variety of evils, from domestic violence and acts of terror to earthquakes and the common cold. In a society that has met with much success in cushioning itself against the ravages of pestilence and famine, in which the concern for personal safety has attained near manic proportions, and where proper eating and exercising habits have largely supplanted the virtues of courage and prudence, we are tempted to become scandalized when we are unable to forestall a tragedy such as that befalling the Crescent City. We are tempted to lay blame where this may not be appropriate.

That said, however, it is inevitable that, when so many have lost lives and livelihood or become refugees in their own country, people will ask questions about the role played by the governing authorities, which are, after all, responsible for ensuring public safety to the extent possible. There is a widespread sense that government failed in performing something basic to its task.

Indeed public safety is a good we are inclined to take for granted. When we get up in the morning, we have every confidence that we will drive or take the bus to work without worrying unduly about being assaulted, robbed or killed. We may or may not see a police officer along the way. We probably will not meet the Prime Minister or a member of parliament, yet we are dependent on the political and legal framework they are responsible for strengthening and maintaining. It's almost always there, even though we are for the most part dimly aware of it and may rarely see its personal representatives.

It is only when there is a breakdown in order that we become fully conscious of what we have lost. Four years ago this month we saw the

John C. Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum, expressed his surprise that teaching both evolution and creationism was favored not only by conservative Christians, but also by the majority of secular respondents, liberal democrats and those who accept the theory of natural selection. He described it as a reflection of "American pragmatism."

"It's like they're saying, 'Some people see it this way, some people see it that way, so just teach it all and let the kids figure it out.'"

President Bush, a practicing Christian, opened the door to debate on August 2 when he commented to reporters that he believed both evolution and Intelligent Design should be taught in schools "so people can understand what the debate is about." Two-thirds of Americans public, including Democrats as well as Republicans, if this poll is to be believed, appear to be convinced he is right.

Telling the story of origins

Commenting on Behe's worldwide bestseller *Darwin's Black Box*, biochemist specialist David Berlinski

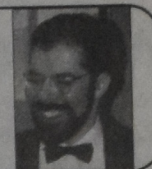
said, "No one can propose to defend Darwin without meeting the challenges set out in this superbly written and compelling book." Equally Christians themselves must take the same robust view whenever they are met with the intransigence – often paper thin in terms of actual knowledge and reasoned argument – of pure evolutionists. Those who believe that Darwin's theories provide the answer to how life got here actually misunderstand Darwin and Darwinism. Darwin never claimed that he could tell us how life came about. He merely theorizes by attempting to explain what might have happened after life came into existence.

In other words, Darwinism no more purports to tell the story of the origin of life, than the North American continent can claim to have come into existence when Columbus set foot on it. Whether we seek to adduce the approach of empirical science fact, associated with the ID case or head-on creationism via the witness of the Bible and faith, we may find our options are conditioned more by common sense and circumstance – being all things to all men – than mere ideological preference or aggressive evangelism.



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

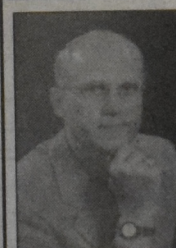


attacks on New York and Washington. Ordinary people who had gone to work in the morning, fully expecting to return home that evening, fell victim to al Qaeda terrorists. The US federal government had failed spectacularly in its ongoing task of protecting American citizens against hostile aggressors. Whatever one thinks of the subsequent actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, they must be seen as efforts to make up for this failure by pre-empting further such episodes.

Natural disasters are, of course, different from premeditated attacks. A hurricane, tornado or earthquake can strike at any time. Governments can hardly be faulted for the damage left behind. Yet, as part of their calling to do public justice, governments at all levels are responsible, in conjunction with the private sector, to undertake contingency planning for such a possibility. They cannot, of course, guarantee that there will be no loss of life, which lies beyond their powers. Yet as part of their mandate to maintain public safety, they need to ensure that a co-ordinated response to disaster is in place well in advance.

Most basically, they need to ensure that law and order are preserved. Any effort to bring relief to victims and survivors will be frustrated if these are lacking in some way. If, however, the police are doing their job in, say, preventing looting and other criminal activities, the disaster will still take its toll. Yet it might be borne more easily, if its victims can be confident that they will not be at the mercy of predators taking advantage of a breakdown in order.

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Editorial

When presidents come to visit

David Crump

On Saturday, May 21, 2005 President George W. Bush brought the commencement address to the graduating seniors of Calvin College, a private, liberal arts institution owned by the Christian Reformed Church, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. That very morning, a letter signed by 149 college faculty, staff, and emeriti appeared in the local newspaper, the Grand Rapids Press. The same paper that had published a similar letter the previous day signed by over 700 Calvin alumni.

I am one of the faculty members who signed that letter, welcoming President Bush to our campus while also challenging him to reconsider his policies on the Iraq war, taxes, the environment, and care for the poor. The public response to our brief treatise, by those who had read it and many more who had not, has served to deepen my concern for the spiritual dangers facing American Christianity, concerns that motivated me to put my name on that letter in the first place.

John Calvin advised all New Testament students to discipline themselves against affirming anything more or anything less than the truth taught in Scripture. Yet, the American church finds itself in an environment where both errors are committed regularly. First, the gospel of Jesus Christ is increasingly shackled to the excess baggage of political partisanship. Second, the good news is often confused with the patriotic affirmations of civil religion. While I strongly agree with the political dissent expressed in our faculty letter, my motives for signing were fueled principally by my concerns about these two spiritual dangers.

Turning to another gospel

Paul's letter to the Galatians confronts a heresy that plagued him for much of his career. His opponents "the Judaizers" insisted that since Christ's New Covenant was the fruition of God's previous covenants with Abraham and Israel, faith in the Messiah obviously complemented both circumcision and law keeping (as required by the Abrahamic and Sinai Covenants, respectively). After all, each covenant had been given by divine revelation, so each must be maintained by any true child of God.

Paul's corrective was swift and uncompromising. Faith in Jesus Christ is the sole requirement for inclusion in the kingdom of God. The signs of earlier covenants are ob-

solete. Attaching requirements like circumcision and law keeping to the simplicity of salvation by grace through faith transformed the message into a false gospel, something to be "accursed," regardless of the status, reputation, or credentials of its advocates (Galatians 1:6-9).

A new type of Judaizer

Days before our faculty letter appeared in print, the phones of several signatories began wringing off the hook. Time and again I was asked the same incredulous question by interviewers. "But I don't understand," they said. "You're an evangelical Christian. I just assumed you would agree with the President."

"Exactly," I insisted. "That's the problem. Too many Americans confuse Christianity with Republican politics."

Then the hate messages began. People who knew nothing more than that I had signed a letter challenging the President's policies believed that this alone proved that I was a wolf in sheep's clothing. I was labeled a "phony," a "hypocrite" who "knew little about the Bible," and was obviously "not a real Christian" (these are just a few of the kinder quotes appropriate for a family publication). Why? I dared to disagree with the President.

At the same time, I received another type of message, positive messages from Christians and non-Christians alike that eventually outnumbered the hate mail by three to one. Most gratifying were the notes from men and women who had become alienated from their Christian upbringings by the confused identification of Jesus Christ with a specific brand of politics.

Diane (not her real name) wrote to confess that our letter to the President had encouraged her to reconsider her youthful abandonment of Christianity. Perhaps Jesus had room for someone like her after all.

James (not his real name) admitted that: "hearing conscientious criticism of the president's agenda from a Christian perspective gives me hope both for our country's future and for finding my own path back to God."

Our letter never claimed to speak for God. Quite the contrary. We affirmed "that no single political position should be identified with God's will, and we are conscious that this applies to our own views as well as those of others." This was the point. Regardless of the heated rhetoric marshaled by certain leaders of the so-called religious right, there is no political litmus test for faithful Christian discipleship. Must we really debate whether or not a person can love, serve, and obey Jesus Christ while endorsing political convictions that diverge from the Republican party? (Interestingly enough, I have yet to receive a message from anyone who has begun to doubt their Christianity because of our letter).

No wonder so many outside the church confuse faith in Jesus with political partisanship when so many inside the church not only commit the same error but promote such confusion in the name of Christ. This is more than an error. It is heresy. The Judaizers defined Christianity as faith in Jesus plus Torah plus circumcision—practices that had been ordained by God. Paul called them apostates, promoters of a false gospel who nullified Christ's sacrifice.

Church history teaches that old heresies die hard; they prefer metastasizing into new strains of spiritual infection for each new generation. Today's American Judaizers appear in the form of Politicizers, Republicanizers who adulterate the indiscriminately good news of Jesus Christ with the Torah of politics and the circumcision of partisanship—neither of which have ever been ordained by God.

I can only hope and pray that Diane, James, and the many other spiritually inquisitive people who contacted me will one day discover the completely non-partisan grace of Jesus Christ, a grace that seeks out "ALL those who are

weary and heavily burdened" (Matthew 11:28), whether Republican, Democrat, Independent, Socialist, Green Party, or Libertarian.

Can we applaud civil religion?

The second danger posed by President Bush's commencement address is as dangerous as the first: neglecting the truth of the gospel for the sake of civility. John Calvin and Paul alike warned against the temptation to subtract from the full measure of truth entrusted to us by God. Yet, neglecting the truth is precisely what President Bush did at Calvin's commencement ceremony.

Traditionally, commencement provides an opportunity to encourage graduates as they embark upon a lifetime of sacrifice as citizens in the kingdom of God. As Calvin's vision statement proclaims, "We pledge fidelity to Jesus Christ, offering our hearts and lives to do God's work in God's world." Yet, the omission of any reference to God or to Christ was deafening in its absence from the President's speech. There was not one reference to God. Not a mention of Jesus Christ. In fact, there was little that would even qualify as religious discourse much less Christian witness. Twice we were admonished to keep the great commandment (to love our neighbor). However, the value of community service had nothing to do with devotion to our Lord. We were urged to serve others, not because it is God's way, or Christ's way, or the kingdom's way, but because it is the American way. Yes, community service is laudatory because it is a typically American virtue. (I heard later how offensive these words were to many of our international students. I was equally offended, especially when the audience erupted in applause).

Religion did eventually come into view as the President encouraged us to serve in our local "churches and temples and mosques and synagogues." My Unitarian neighbor would have felt right at home. Despite all of the assurances that the President would tailor his speech to a Calvin audience, his words revealed nothing whatsoever about a Christian man speaking to Christian graduates at a Christian college about living Christian lives; there was not even the whisper of a reminder to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, whether in the city center or village square. We heard a political stump speech pure and simple, a speech promoting faith-based initiatives that demand equal recognition of all religious convictions.

The President's commencement address turned out to be a standard discourse on American, civil religion confusing patriotism with piety, generic religiosity for true Godliness. As such, it was an exercise in idolatry.

What else could we expect?

Of course, it was all entirely predictable. Whenever the President speaks in public he represents all Americans, religious and irreligious. His speechwriters know full well that explicit confessions of uncompromised devotion to Christ as the world's true Savior, and the ultimate answer to society's ills, will not poll well across these United States.

Yet, this is precisely why the President should never have delivered Calvin's commencement address. It is also why I would protest any similar invitation to a Democratic President just as strongly. I know that many will insist that Calvin's broader context, its connection with the Christian Reformed Church for instance, supplied enough explicitly Christian background to redeem the platitudes and to transform the affirmations of civil religion into a Christian confession. Perhaps, but I doubt it.

Is this what Christian witness and the educational mission of "cultural transformation" come to after four years
See *When Presidents ... continued on p. 18*

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Letters

Will next federal budget include new national priorities?

Gerald Vandezande

Labour Day is the traditional occasion to honor labour and all who labour. It also is the day when labour leaders, editors, politicians and executives often speak their minds regarding the dignity of work, the role of unions, the importance of social justice, and the state of the economy. This year was no exception.

There is increasing concern about many job losses and their impacts on the Canadian economy, on government budgets and numerous families, especially the poor among us.

These realities also affect why, how, when and where the federal government uses its annual surpluses. For example, Ottawa posted a budgetary surplus of \$9.1 billion in 2003/2004, marking the seventh consecutive year in which it has recorded a surplus. The entire \$9.1 billion was used to reduce the federal fiscal debt. Nothing was set aside to address more vigorously Canada's growing environmental and social debts.

Capitalism and war not allies

According to Bert Hielema, "capitalism is defined as 'creative destruction'. War is its ultimate ally." (CC 15-8-2005: 18). Is it? A few years before World War I Norman Angell wrote a book entitled *The Great Illusion* (1910) in which he argued that force was futile as a means of imposing ideas and institutions; that war was irrational, a mistake, and not inevitable; that no nation could profit economically from international war; and that conquest was an illusion and therefore cooperation should replace force in international relations.

Contrary to Hielema, Angell argued

Sheila Fraser on the fiscal debt

Auditor General Sheila Fraser has stated that the government is not legally required to reduce only the fiscal debt. Parliament has yet to articulate the vision and demonstrate the conviction to help consistently tackle the worsening environmental calamities and social tragedies – such as pollution, homelessness, hunger and poverty.

Ralph Goodale on "mindless race to the bottom"

However, we may soon see a real change. In his recent speech to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Finance Minister Ralph Goodale stressed the need for increased productivity. He then added: "There will be growing demand for age-related social services, such as health care, retirement homes and pensions. And in order to pay all the bills of an ageing population and, at the same time, produce sufficient new wealth to keep the economy growing, each member of our future smaller workforce will need to be able to generate greater value than

that capitalism and war were not allies. His ideas, sometimes mistakenly identified with pacifism, became so popular in Britain that they were called Angellism. In spite of Angell's arguments, many socialists at that time posited that World War I was capitalist-inspired. It seems to me that Hielema resurrected an old, outdated socialist slogan. Hielema referred to the Latin *optimus*, but in his optimism he opted not for the best statement.

Yours truly
Bert den Boggende
Brooks, AB

Oasis in the wilderness of journalism

We do appreciate CC; for us it is an oasis in the wilderness of (Christian) journalism. In spite of limited resources wonderful work is done as an independent paper. Your editorials reflect inspiration and encouragement and are thought-provoking on contemporary issues. And at times you allow us to take a good look at ourselves and help us to sort out what is good and not so good, tongue-in-cheek with a fine sense of humor at times.

Some of Harry Antonides article's take me back to the early 50's during the Korean war when I heard one of our pastors pray in his congregational prayer "Here zegen de wapenen van Amerika" (Lord bless the weapons of America), a period where we in the western world felt threatened by communism. Harry seems to have great faith in American foreign policy, which is a policy of dominance and submission. History is there to teach us that a policy of that nature leads to inescapable doom, I am afraid.

Ty Hofman talks about Albertans who have a vested interest in Calvin College (Aug. 25). We also have a vested interest in that institution, a good number of our family have graduated from that school and at present five grandchildren are attending. When we heard that Nick Wolterstorff (one off our most prominent educators) was dumped to replace president Bush as graduation speaker, we were shocked. We fully understood the question of a 75-year-old alumni "Where has Calvin gone?" on a protest sign. President Byker owes her and the rest of us a response. It was a sad and dark day for Calvin College.

Bert Hielema is the one with the most prophetic voice and probably the least popular with some of us – but that is hardly new. Prophets have never been popular through the ages. To be sure he is cocky at times but he knows that very well himself, we certainly can identify with his opinions

Evert and Klaziena Wassink
Forest, Ont

his or her more numerous predecessors.

"Some fear this type of scenario. They suspect that talk about increasing Canadian productivity is just code for lower pay, longer working hours and job cuts. But let's be absolutely clear – that is *not* what 'increasing productivity' is all about, and it's certainly *not* what the Government of Canada has in mind. In fact, we want the exact opposite. Expecting people to work harder for less money will not, ultimately, lead to real productivity growth. We are not interested in some mindless 'race to the bottom'! Instead, Canadians want us to 'reach for the top'." Indeed, "basic government 'framework' policies need to be right." (*Emphasis by the Minister*)

Quantity of things vs. quality of life

We must move away from idolizing the Gross Domestic Product, away from growth mania that views economic development exclusively in terms of the *quantity of things* and move us towards promoting human, truly economic, environmental and social well-being instead – the *quality of life*.

We urgently need equitable economic growth that would meet legitimate human needs and contribute to the environmental and socio-economic well-being of all people. We need to practice inclusive stewardship.

Among other duties, such as national defence and international aid and development, government has the public-justice responsibility for creating, protecting and nurturing the social home of the national community – not merely promoting the Gross Domestic Product (which is often *gross*). This inclusive meaning of economics and politics – a new bottom line – recognizes the importance of material well-being.

Lerner on "a new bottom line"

As the American Jewish author Michael Lerner has pointed out, "In most Western societies, productivity or efficiency is measured by the degree to which any individual or institution or legislation or

social practice increases wealth or power. To pay attention to the bottom line is thus defined as paying attention to the degree to which the person or the project in question succeeds in maximizing wealth and power. Other goals are ancillary – acceptable only if they help accomplish (or, at least, do not thwart) the material goal."

Lerner "posits a new bottom line." While his view of productivity "...does not reject the importance of material well-being, it subsumes that concern within an expanded view of 'the good life': one that insists on the primacy of spiritual harmony, loving relationships, mutual recognition, and work that contributes to the common good." (*The Politics of Meaning*, p.56)

CHAC on "the common good"

The Catholic Health Association of Canada has articulated, "the basic ethical principles involved in building a healthy economy and society" as follows: "According to the Church's social teachings, respect for the value and dignity of the human person lies at the center of a healthy economy and society. Since all persons are made in the image of God, they have an inalienable right to the basic needs of life, namely, the right to adequate food, clothing, shelter, employment, education, healthcare, a clean environment and the right to participate in decisions affecting these rights. This is what is known as the principle of the common good. In effect, all persons in a given society should have, as a fundamental human right, common access to, and use of, those resources, goods and services that make for a more fully human life. All other rights whatsoever," the Church proclaims, "including those of property and free commerce, are to be subordinated to this principle."

CPJ on "public justice"

Citizens for Public Justice asserts: "Public justice characterizes the government's task. Public justice requires government to use power in an equitable way. Governments

See *Federal Budget* on page 15 ...

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Anniversary

60 years decade by decade

Harry der Nederlanden

I'm continuing the decade by decade peek into *CC*'s past that I began in the last issue. I had intended to carry it through to 1985 last time, but there wasn't enough space – another way of saying I got too wordy. The past is seductive.

As I did the survey, besides the obvious changes in topics from one decade to the next, I also noticed that the *CC*'s from the mid-fifties carried a lot more articles about international events. Those in the mid-sixties carried longer articles expounding worldview issues and arguing broad principles relating to education, labor and political action. And as we leap to the mid-seventies, we find *CC* in the middle of anxious polemics about theological and church issues.

During the first couple of decades of its existence, *CC* tended to avoid not just most church news but also most theological issues in the narrow sense. The editors were very aware that *CC* was not intended to be a church paper, but they were not always able to keep denominational issues out of the paper, for the church was a very central reality in the lives of its readers. But in the seventies the women-in-office debate took up lots of space, and in its wake it dragged many other church issues into the paper as well, from tradition to hermeneutics. And as we see the community becoming increasingly polarized, other stories get pushed to the margins.

The seventies: theological debates

But I won't risk any further generalizations. Let's dive right into the September 1975 issues.

Charles Colson made it onto the front page. He was still known primarily as the former top aide of the disgraced President Richard Nixon. His story appears beside one that crows that the Christian Farmers Organization of Ontario made it into the pages of the prestigious *Globe and Mail*.

Colson was on a promotional tour for his first book after his release from prison – *Born Again*. When the book was published, I was working for Paul Schrottenboer of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and recall that news of Colson's conversion was first received with some skepticism, but *Born Again* removed all doubts. Schrottenboer gave it an enthusiastic review. In the book

Colson testified that reading C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* changed the way he looked at other people. In the interview he also expressed his hopes to start a prison ministry with the money earned from his speaking engagements. He has certainly carried through on his dream and been a blessing.

The Globe and Mail praised the CFFO for being "among the fairest and most rational" of all groups in the province. Said the paper: "The CFFO has gone much further down the road of understanding the new era of farmer relationships with the rest of the community than any other farm group." The CFFO may not be as well known as Colson, but it too has been a blessing.

One letter about the women-in-office issue is especially interesting. The writer describes all the tasks that women are already performing in the church and in the church community and concludes that these are considerably more important than the tasks performed by "so-called office bearers." In other words, is the office in the doing of the deed or in the formal rank? (It always helps, of course, to keep the two together.)

Growing institutions

The First International Conference for Christian Higher Education met at Dordt College Sept. 9-13, 1975 and made it to the front page of *CC*. Readers were, however, spared summaries of the speeches made by the seven speakers. In the intervening years IAPCHE has grown tremendously, but it still has its offices on the campus of Dordt College where John B. Hulst, former president of Dordt, has nursed the organization through some rough years to its present status. This past August IAPCHE's European wing met in Moscow on the campus of St. Andrew's Theological College. IAPCHE has its own website www.iapche.org where those interested in nurturing Christian scholarship in poorer countries can contribute to the cause.

Nick Wolterstorff spoke at the 55th Annual Convention of the National Union of Christian Schools (now Christian Schools International) during the summer of 1975. That means, I guess, the convention held in lovely Ottawa this past summer was the 85th annual convention. It, too, has grown tremendously since 1975:

this year's convention, for example, required four keynote speakers. Back in 1975 Wolterstorff urged educators to break out of the institutional forms of Canadian and American society. Many of them, he said, are fundamentally wrong. Thirty years later the spiritual tension between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world was again a central theme.

An article on Rhodesia – now Zimbabwe – accuses the World Council of Churches of supporting terrorism by giving money to the African National Council. The name of Nelson Mandela comes up: he's the new leader of the ANC and is accused of turning the organization from its former non-violent path to a new militancy. Some stories like Colson's and those of NUCS and IAPCHE fill you with hope when you look back on their beginnings; Zimbabwe's story does not.

Relations between Canada and the U.S. have been rocky recently, but the *CC* reported on growing differences between the two countries in 1975 already. In fact, it quotes a U.S. official as saying that we could no longer speak of a special bond between the U.S. and Canada.

Why not? The Americans were upset because *Time Magazine* and *Reader's Digest* had been deprived of their privileges in Canada, restrictions imposed on U.S. investment and rising oil prices.

Canada raised the price of oil being shipped south out of Alberta. The U.S. thought \$12 per barrel too high. Canadian negotiators pointed out that Ontario was paying that much for oil it was importing from the U.S. Thirty years later, that still sounds like a good argument.

Seeing others

Rev. Louis Tamminga contributed a couple of articles on the Anabaptists to alter our understanding of some fellow Christians. Until recently, he said, they were seen primarily in the light of the excesses around Muenster, the German city they seized in the 16th century to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The revolution turned first into an orgy and then into a massacre as the German princes took back the city. More recent historical scholarship, says Tamminga, has given us a much more sympathetic insight into the



much-maligned Anabaptists. Their vision of biblical obedience and liberty stressed discipleship.

Their spiritual heirs, the Mennonites "have blazed a trail in works of mercy and rehabilitation" here in Canada and in societies around the world. We can learn a great deal from them.

It is ironic, says Tamminga, that the Anabaptists began with the act of faith of the individual believer but end up stressing the living body of Christ. Meanwhile, often Reformed Christians, beginning with the body, end up acting like individualists in contemporary society.

A huge ad for Premier Bill Davis, who was seeking reelection as premier of Ontario for the Progressive Conservatives, appeared in the Sept. 15, 1975 *CC*. Davis said he has kept down taxes and the price of gas and oil, improved the educational institutions of Ontario, health care and care for the elderly. The ad ends by singing the praises of multiculturalism. That was the Conservative platform in the mid-seventies. One wonders how it differed from the Liberal platform.

Other than the ad, none of the issues of either this month or the next carry any articles about Canadian politics, federal or provincial.

Rev. John Veenstra was writing a series of articles on L'Abri and the thought of Francis Schaeffer. He

chimes in with Schaeffer's critique of modern evangelicalism's over-emphasis on the emotional and experiential. While we must not elevate the intellect, says Veenstra, just because an experience is intense does not mean it's from God. He quotes Schaeffer as saying that the status of Scripture is very much at issue in the CRC as it is among the Lutherans and Baptists.

In the early seventies I met some young men in their early twenties who had come to faith through the Jesus people (remember them?), and I found the books of Schaeffer an excellent way to introduce them to the big themes of a biblical worldview.

No advertisements of farms for sale in any of the Sept. 1975 issues, but one carries announcements by four churches celebrating their 25th anniversary: Rocky Mountain House, First CRC in Abbotsford, First CRC of Ladner and First CRC of Barrie. So on our 60th anniversary those churches are marking their 55th anniversary, or perhaps they're just joining in with the whole Canadian CRC to celebrate the 100th anniversary.

The eighties: second thoughts

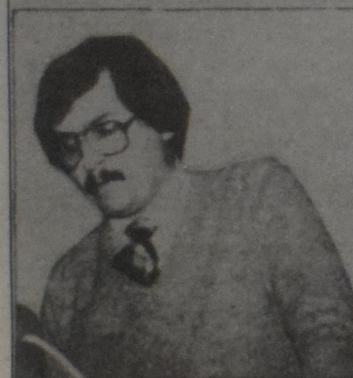
On the front page of the August 30, 1985 *CC* there's a reminder to teachers that school begins again September 3. I'm betting that the editor – Bert Witvoet, himself a former teacher – didn't actually think teachers needed

Anniversary

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE



Mr. Gerald Vandezande,
Public Affairs Director



Dr. Paul Marshall
Research Associate

that reminder. I'm sure, too, that he didn't do it just to needle them a little.

In his editorial, Bert tells the story of the CRC immigrant community in Houston, B.C., prior to the establishment of a Christian school there. In the early fifties CRC parents discovered that the Christmas program at the local public school was solely about Santa Claus. So the next year they all decided to keep their kids home. They boycotted the program. The school principal called a meeting to hear out the parents. Some school board members also showed up at the meeting and got quite hot under the collar, saying some unkind things to the Dutch deeppees (displaced persons).

But the school's principal asked the board members to leave, and after listening to the parents, he asked them to organize the Christmas program. Everyone in the community seemed to appreciate the Christ-centred program. Later, the president of the public school board became a Christian school supporter and eventually joined the CRC.

Wouldn't it have been better for those parents to stay in the public system to act as a leaven, asked Bert. Our separateness does undermine to some extent our ability to be a light to the world.



Finding pictures that we can reproduce in the 1975 and 1985 issues we looked at was difficult. CC did not carry very many pictures at this time and many were very washed out to begin with and have faded even more over the years.

I selected the picture of Rev. Uittenbosch partly because you'll find another picture of him in the anniversary pages of the last issue. The two pictures from 1985 feature two Christian organizations Citizens for Public Justice and Redeemer College (it had not yet received university status then). They both come from CC inserts. CPJ was supporting an Ontario bill to give equal funding for Catholic schools in Ontario and someone paid for a two-page insert in CC. Redeemer was marking its fourth convocation in Sept. 1985 and was looking forward to its new campus in Ancaster, where construction was just beginning.

Looking at the photo of the new church in Regina, I wasn't sure whether it was an A-frame or whether the snowdrifts were unusually high that year.

Bert doesn't urge CC readers to fold up their schools and other Christian organizations, but he does say that our separation lays on us the onus to look for creative ways to interact with and witness to our fellow Canadians.

Reformed separateness

A long letter from Frank Sawyer in Kampen, The Netherlands, challenges the commitment to Christian organizations pushed in articles by Harry Antonides and Syrt Wolters. He suggests that there are some limits and drawbacks to that approach. He raises quite a number of questions. For example: "Are Christians who participate in Christian organizations more spiritually awake than those who witness inside non-Christian organizations? Doesn't a consolidation of believers in separate organizations withdraw light from other organizations?"

About the defense of Christian norms, he asks, aren't we in danger of setting up our own interpretations as eternal norms?

Then he takes another angle and questions our defense of pluralism: doesn't this contradict our appeal to divine norms?

What gives us the idea that we have access to principles by which to reform different areas of society anyway? Aren't we more likely to simply pursue our own self-interests?

Sawyer also questions our dream of uniting all Christians behind our programs in the areas of labor and politics. Isn't it more likely that we will only add some pious footnotes to secular programs?

Sawyer raises these questions

not as an opponent of Christian organizations but as a supporter. They are questions that still need to be asked 20 years later.

Two successive issues of CC in September 1985 begin with articles that critique Reformed separateness. One is an interview with William Jones, the editor of *The Canadian Baptist* (which seems to have disappeared). He is opposed to government support for Christian schools. He'd prefer everyone to attend public school and then choose electives in religious education – but not in school time. Just because unbelievers commit adultery and steal more than Christians doesn't mean Christians should withdraw. He suggests in the interview that his children who are products of the public school "are the better for it" while some of those who have attended Christian schools "came out with damaged characters."

The other article is an interview with James Dickey, editor of the *Presbyterian Record*. Dickey laments that despite the commonalities between Presbyterians and Reformed folk, they will never get together. Although Presbyterians also confess the lordship of Jesus Christ, he says, they draw different conclusions from it. CRC folk are too sure of themselves and too suspicious of engagement with "outsiders," he says. Presbyterians outsiders aren't such bad folk. He lamented that the CRC, the Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church could not work together more closely. Soon, he warned, "there will be no Calvinist witness

left in this country."

In two successive issues long letters take the editor to task for an editorial about the ills of apartheid in South Africa. Both warn CC against supporting the call of the World Council of Churches to impose sanctions on South Africa. Why should South Africa be singled out, they ask. There are many countries that are much more guilty of abridging the rights of their people and of much greater injustice.

"First immigrant pastor retires," announced one of CC's headlines. The story apologizes for having named Rev. George Hoytema earlier as the first immigrant pastor. The one who really deserves that title says the article, is Rev. E. Bouma, who came to the congregation of Essex, Ontario from the Netherlands in September of 1952.

But, hold the presses: the *Canadian Calvinist* of January 1950 said that Rev. G.G. Haan was the first minister of Monarch CRC, the first CRC in Canada, and he was an immigrant to Canada, wasn't he? You can't believe everything you read in CC. But perhaps he didn't count because he stopped off in Winnipeg first.

Thirty years earlier CC carried numerous ads tempting Dutch immigrants with farms for sale all across the country. In 1985 we see pictures of those farmers staring down at drought-stricken crops. Things haven't been this bad in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan since the dirty thirties, says one farmer.



Rev. H. Uittenbosch, aboard the S.S. Batory, a Polish passenger ship presents a Bible to the ship's captain.

Ken Karsten of Claresholm, Alberta said, "Last year we thought, 'Well, at least things can't get any worse.' 1985 proved that they could." He expected to get less than one-quarter the yield of other years. Cattle farmers were worried about getting enough feed for their herds. Farming, it seems, has always been a rough ride, bouncing between high hopes and the hard, unyielding earth. Maybe that's why farm folk pray more than city folk.

Whereas in 1975, we had ARSS conferences, in 1985 the Institute of Christian Studies is advertising evening courses in biblical foundations and in the philosophy of education. An article inside rejoices that enrolment at King's College increased 20 percent over the previous year.

Holland Homes placed a large ad for Registered Nurses and Nursing Assistants, as it was scheduled to open the following month. Does that mean Holland Homes is celebrating its 20th anniversary this October?

Dordt College advertised a spring semester in the Netherlands. I heaved a sigh seeing that. Why didn't they have programs like that when I went to Dordt? In the mid-sixties young people were beginning to backpack across Europe. A friend and I made plans to do that, but then he fell head-over-heels in love with an Iowa girl and got married instead. That sunk our travel plans. A year later I followed his example and married an Iowa girl too. I never did get to visit the Netherlands, but I made numerous visits to Iowa since then. The Netherlands is probably overrated anyway – otherwise, why would so many people have left?

Church

Islam's hard brand of law Rise of Shariah is raising concerns

WASHINGTON, D.C., (Zenit.org) – Concern over extremist Islamic groups and terrorism has renewed interest in the role played by Shariah, a form of Islamic law. A recent book, *Radical Islam's Rules*, looks at the influence of what it termed “the rapid growth of a starkly repressive version of Islamic shariah law.”

Edited by Paul Marshall, senior fellow at Washington-based Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, the book contains essays from a variety of human rights activists and experts on the issue of religious freedom.

In his introduction Marshall explains that extreme Islam is only one strand of the religion, which began its modern phase as a reaction to the secularization of Turkey in the early 20th century. He also observes that most people who push for the spread of Shariah are not terrorists, though “such law is part of the terrorist's ideology.”

Shariah is a combination of both civil and religious matter. It tries to synthesize the Koran, the sayings of Islam's founder Mohammed, and the life of the prophet and his early followers. As well as being divided into a number of schools of interpretation, Shariah also differs from place to place insofar as it has incorporated local laws and traditions.

The extreme form of Shariah, Marshall points out, seeks to entrench only one version, an extreme literalist view that has a double foundation: one that is based on Wahhabism, the form of Islam followed in Saudi Arabia; and the extreme form of Islamic law introduced by the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1979, following the overthrow of the shah.

Prior to 1979 only Saudi Arabia was governed by Shariah, but in the last couple of decades it has spread to a number of other countries. In Pakistan, Shariah has been gradually supplanting the previous legal system. Sudan introduced a radical form of Shariah in 1983. Then, in 1994, the Taliban in Afghanistan began to institute a form of Shariah.

Nigeria has incorporated Shariah into the legal system since independence. In recent years some of the country's northern states have announced that Shariah will be given the leading role in determining laws. In Asia, meanwhile, some states in Malaysia have introduced laws based on Shariah. Similar efforts in Indonesia have been blocked, though at the local level radicals enforce Shariah in some areas, writes Marshall.

Saudi ways

In his chapter on how Shariah operates in Saudi Arabia, author and journalist Stephen Schwartz explains

that it has dominated the country since the 1930s, even if pockets of resistance persist. Members of minority groups face stringent penalties. The mere possession of writings that belong to the Sufi school of Islam is a capital offense, and Shiite Muslims face regular persecution.

Characteristics of Shariah as practiced in Saudi Arabia include the prohibition of any public practice of non-Muslim religion and a ban against bringing into the country any non-Muslim religious literature or objects, even for personal use. Women's rights are systematically denied, including the possibility of driving cars.

Maarten Barends, lawyer and editor of a youth magazine for Amnesty International in the Netherlands, describes the situation in Pakistan. The legal system is unstable and a variety of principles and norms is a feature of its operation, with remnants of the 19th-century British-style penal code still in function.

But in recent times there has been a growing influence of Shariah, especially in the northwestern region bordering Afghanistan. As well, in the last couple of decades Shariah's influence in the criminal code has expanded. In 1979 Pakistani President Zia Ul-Haq introduced Shariah into the criminal legal code and made major changes in the judicial system. This has led to persecution of non-Muslims and to ill treatment of women. In the last few years Christians and Hindus alike have suffered at the hands of Muslim extremists.

Changes in Sudan

The 1983 introduction of Shariah in Sudan rekindled a civil war that led to more than two decades of conflict. In his contribution to the book, human rights activist Hamouda Fathelrahman Bella describes how the change was accompanied by the sacking of many prominent judges and the creation of new tribunals to implement Shariah. Amputations, public floggings and executions quickly followed.

A 1989 military coup worsened the situation, leading to the domination of “a regime of fanatics.” The government, based in the northern part of the country with a predominantly Muslim population, waged war on the Christian and animist population in the southern regions. This was backed by fatwas, or religious decrees, that were used to justify enslavement and the wholesale destruction of villages, schools and churches.

The legal system underwent various changes after 1983, but a new legal code introduced in 1991 and the 1999 constitution have further entrenched the official role of Islam and the permit the practice of harsh punishments dictated by Shariah norms.

Conflict in Nigeria

In his chapter on Nigeria, Paul Marshall notes that in the short time since the 1999 introduction of Shariah in the state of Zamfara, 12 of the 16 northern and central states have adopted a form of Islamic law.

Marshall draws attention to the role played by foreign aid in stimulating the changes. Representatives from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Sudan have been present in some of the states. The changes quickly led to problems for Christians. Not only have they been denied permission to build churches in some areas, but some existing churches have been destroyed. Non-Muslims have also suffered discrimination in jobs, and Muslim programs dominate the state-owned media outlets.

As in other countries the Shariah criminal code discriminates against women in matters such as adultery, with some women sentenced to death by stoning. Cruel punishments are also allowed, with little chance of appeal. Non-Muslims are subjected to Shariah courts, but are barred from being judges, prosecutors or lawyers in these tribunals.

Problems for freedom

A concluding chapter by Nina Shea, director of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, notes that the core premise of Shariah is that the law has been given by Allah without human mediation. By thus placing the system beyond any possibility of debate or accountability, serious problems for freedom result.

This premise has led to coercion and repression by governments and, Shea argues, “in country after country, it has had devastating implications for basic human rights.” To the extent that it becomes a method of absolute control, Shariah is better understood as a political ideology, Shea says.

An example of the political effects is the screening of election candidates by Iran's religious Council of Guardians that, in 2004, disqualified over 2,000 would-be contenders, mostly reformists.

Shea is critical of the lack of attention paid to the phenomenon of Shariah. She also notes that Saudi Arabia is given a free hand to promote its version of radical Islamic ideology, even in Western societies such as the United States. Material financed and distributed by the Saudi regime incites hatred toward Christians, Jews and other non-Muslims, and in Pakistan Saudi-funded religious schools, or madrassas, have become a breeding camp for terrorists. Grounds indeed for concern over where Islam is headed.

Anglican leader urges Islam: Be 'critical friend' of Western society

Martin Revis

London (ENI) – The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has urged Islam to join other faiths in dialogue and partnership with Western “secular” nations.

“I hope for a political climate in Europe that is open to cooperation between state and religious enterprise,” Williams told an inter-faith gathering in Lyon, France, according to a text of his remarks on September 12 released in London. “If this does not happen, the state becomes unselfcritical in its godlessness and religious communities become isolated and defensive; they too lose the capacity for critical awareness.”

The September 11-13 meeting in Lyon is the 19th such inter-religious gathering organized by the St Egidio community, a Rome-based lay community founded in 1968 which now counts 50,000 members active in 60 countries.

Williams, the leader of the worldwide Anglican communion said: “For Islam – and other religious traditions – to join the Christian churches in the work of cooperating and negotiating with ‘secular’ states is the best hope for the avoiding of extremism and violence fuelled by the resentful sense that faith is not taken seriously in the public realm.”

The archbishop continued, “Islam, in such circumstances, is invited to become, along with other historic religious communities of Christian Europe, the critical friend of the modern state, asking awkward questions, forming partnerships.”

He noted: “This does suggest the challenge to Islam is to continue formulating new ways of understanding itself in a non-Muslim environment; but not some wholesale abandonment of its reflective theological history.”

Priestly rump causes rumpus in Poland

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) – Some members of Poland's Roman Catholic church have criticized a leading clothes company, after it launched a nationwide jeans advert featuring a priest clad in denims and wearing a clerical collar.

“This firm has deliberately used a priest, knowing men of the cloth avoid publicly expressing their fashion preferences – it's dragged the clergy into a game of market forces,” Janusz Krolkowski, a professor from Holy Cross University in Rome, told Poland's Catholic information agency. “It's a misunderstanding, an absurdity and an abuse. The firm is using something which doesn't belong to it, for purposes which are wholly inappropriate.”

Krolkowski was reacting to an autumn campaign by the company, Reserved, showing a model in a black shirt and priest's collar wearing new-look jeans.

However, the posters were defended by the company's marketing director, Mariusz Kozak-Zagodzka, who said they were intended to “show true beauty and style” to their target audience of 17 to 25-year-olds, while also using “anecdotes and jokes”.

The Catholic Church, to which at least 95 per cent of Poland's 38 million citizens belong, has frequently criticized the use of religious images in company promotions.

In the mid-1990s, it attacked the Italian firm, United Colours of Benetton, for a poster showing a priest kissing a nun. In 2001, it accused the British insurance company, Norwich Union, of using satanist elements in its advertising.

However, the Reserved advert was defended by another prominent priest, who said the posters would “cause a problem” only if they depicted a real priest without his consent.

“A priest is a public person – he belongs to the Polish landscape, and there's no embargo here on using his image in advertising,” said Adam Boniecki, editor of the Roman Catholic Tygodnik Powszechny weekly newspaper. “We should take such things more calmly – and even with satisfaction, if a priest is also portrayed as someone with exemplary good taste.”

Church

Christian village in Palestine attacked by Muslim mob

Elizabeth Kendal

Late on Saturday evening September 3, a riotous Muslim mob from the West Bank village of Deir Jarir attacked the neighboring Christian village of Taiba, northeast of Ramallah. They came armed with clubs, kerosene and Molotov cocktails, chanting, "Let's burn the infidels, let's burn the Crusaders." Residents were beaten, houses were looted and cars were burned. At least 13 homes were torched. The attack lasted until the early hours of Sunday morning, when Palestinian Authority (PA) security police finally made it through the Israeli checkpoints.

The Muslims were searching for Christian shop-keeper Mehdi Khouriyye (also written as "Mahdi Abu Houria") and targeting the homes of his extended family. PA police arrived just in time to save Mehdi Khouriyye from being lynched, but not in time to save the homes of all his relatives. Mehdi Khouriyye and 15 of the Deir Jarir Muslim attackers were then arrested. But after several hours, the police released the Muslims in order to "cool things down." Meanwhile, victim Mehdi Khouriyye remains in "protective custody," where he is reportedly routinely beaten.

Whilst Muslim intolerance of Christians has escalated in Palestine, the attack on Taiba is the biggest and most organised Muslim attack upon a Palestinian Christian community in years. Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi regards the Taiba attack as a "a very serious development". She says she has witnessed a "regression of social norms."

The implications for vulnerable Palestinian Christians, especially if the PA police are going to be partisan, are horrendous.

From love to tragedy

Mehdi Khouriyye, has a tailoring business in Taiba. He employed Hiyam Ajaj (30), a Muslim woman from Deir Jarir, and the two fell in love. The pair had been in a romantic relationship for two years before Hiyam's family learned of the affair in late August of this year. Making matters worse, Hiyam was six months pregnant. Within days, she was dead, poisoned by her own family in an honor killing. Hiyam's body was then quickly buried and the death not reported.

Initially the family claimed that Hiyam was raped and had committed suicide. Insisting the baby was not his, Mehdi Khouriyye requested that Hiyam's body be disinterred for DNA testing. *The Guardian* reports that Palestinian president Abu Mazen

gave permission for Hiyam's body to be exhumed and for DNA testing to be done to determine paternity. Despite the family's protests, Hiyam's body was disinterred August 30.

Palestinian women's groups claim that if a woman is raped by a family member then she will be killed to restore family honor and an innocent man will be blamed — made a scapegoat — and killed in "revenge."

The September 3 Muslim attack on Taiba has left at least 13 Christian families homeless. The Muslims attackers from Deir Jarir seek to justify their criminal barbarity with talk of "honor." Meanwhile the Christians of Taiba say the violence against them was inspired by pure religious hatred and was nothing less than Muslims using vulnerable Christians as scapegoats.

Christian fears

Suleiman Khouriyye, a cousin of Mehdi Khouriyye, blames sectarianism. "They did this because we're Christians. They did this because we are the weaker ones."

Samir Qumsieh, who runs the only Christian private TV channel in the West Bank, told Adnkronos International (AKI), "Many cases like this are happening and the time has come for Abu Maazen (president Mahmoud Abbas) to take a decisive stand." Qumsieh told AKI that he has registered more than 100 attacks against the Christian community since 2003. Qumsieh calls the violence "religious racism," and says the attacks include murders, rapes and extortion.

"Some people lay the blame on Islamic extremists," he says, "but this is only part of the truth." Qumsieh says the most common attacks are perpetrated by what he calls "the Muslim land mafia," criminals who target Christian land or home owners and threaten them to force them off their property. Qumsieh believes PA officials are involved in this practice. "It was the situation under [former PA president] Arafat, and it is the situation under Abu Maazen," he says.

In February, Samir Qumsieh, together with other prominent Christian Palestinians, wrote a letter to the PA president outlining their fears and grievances. "We have had no reply," he says, "and our anger and our fear are growing."

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Indonesian Muslims support embattled Christians

Patrick Goodenough,

Embattled Christians in Indonesia, facing intimidation and threats from militant Muslims, are getting offers of help from an unexpected source.

The head of Indonesia's huge traditionalist Muslim organization, Nadhlatul Ulama (N.U.), has spoken out against the actions of Islamists who have forcibly shut down dozens of churches in West Java province.

He even has offered to send N.U. militiamen to protect vulnerable churches, which the extremists claim are operating illegally.

Hard-line groups have also been stepping up agitation against Christians, accusing them of converting Muslims.

In July, a top clerical body issued a decree outlawing liberalism, pluralism and secularism, and last month, extremists raided a West Java compound of Ahmadis, members of an Islamic sect considered heretical by mainstream Muslims.

Recently, three Christian women were jailed for "christianizing" Muslim children.

The developments have raised deep concern among Christians in a country where thousands died in Christian-Muslim clashes in the late 1990s and early this century.

Against that background, the intervention of N.U. chairman Hasyim Muzadi is seen as highly significant.

An N.U. spokeswoman said from Jakarta Tuesday that, heading an organization with a membership of around 40 million people across the country, Muzadi carried a lot of influence.

He said he called on moderate Muslims to embrace tolerance of minority religions, and voiced strong opposition to any moves to shut down churches.

He also said that members of N.U.'s "security wing," known as Banser, could be deployed to guard

churches if necessary. Members of Banser (the name is an Indonesian acronym meaning "multipurpose front") are mostly young men, trained in martial arts, who provide security at N.U. religious gatherings.

Muzadi is not the only senior Muslim figure speaking on behalf of Christians.

The Antara news agency reported that when more than a thousand Christians demonstrated in central Jakarta on behalf of religious freedom on Saturday, they were joined by two well-known political figures, former Indonesian president (and former N.U. head) Abdurrahman Wahid and former parliamentary speaker Akbar Tandjung.

On Sunday, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's spokesman said Yudhoyono had instructed the police to act against anyone perpetrating violence on the basis of religion.

The problems have been caused by the Islamic Defenders' Front, known for attacks on venues selling alcohol and for threatening behavior towards Westerners, and another group known as the Anti-Apostasy Movement (AGAP).

Through intimidation and vandalism, the groups have forced a number of churches to close. Some reports cite Christian figures as saying more than 35 had been shut down over the past year.

AGAP officials have openly admitted forcing about 20 churches to close, most recently in the last fortnight, claiming they were acting because of local complaints.

Local reports say the extremists accuse the churches of operating without a permit, relying on a 1969 decree requiring approval from local authorities and the community for the construction of non-Muslim places of worship.

With Muslims in the majority in most of Indonesia, getting the go-

ahead from local residents can be difficult in some parts, the *Jakarta Post* reported.

Some Christians have urged the government to revoke the 1969 decree, and Yudhoyono's spokesman said he had instructed ministers and local administration heads to find a solution in line with the constitutional guarantee of freedom to worship.

The statements from the president's office contrasted in tone from remarks last week by the minister of religious affairs, M. Maftuh Basyuni, who was quoted as saying that it was not churches that had been shut down, but "illegal congregations."

They had been set up in residential areas, where they "created anxiety" among the majority Muslim community in the West Java, he said.

Last week, a West Java court jailed three women, Rebecca Laonita, Ratna Mala Bangun, and Ety Pangesti for three years after convicting them of violating child protection laws by "Christianizing" Muslim children.

According to Assist news service, the three had conducted a Vacation Bible School-type program in their homes last May, attended by children with their parents' permission. None of the children had converted, it said, but the women were nonetheless accused of indoctrinating them.

During their trial, Islamists were trucked in and protested frequently in and outside the courtroom, reportedly threatening to kill the women if they were acquitted.

"Indonesia, the largest Islamic country in the world, fails to prevent harassment, persecution, or other harmful acts against minority Christians," Christian Freedom International president Jim Jacobson said in a statement.

"Indonesia does not respond to violations of religious freedom against Christians by nongovernmental entities or local officials."

Church of Sweden launches million euro advertising campaign

Lars Grip

Stockholm (ENI) — The Church of Sweden has launched a 1.1 million euro (US\$1.37 million) publicity campaign, taking out full-page advertisements in 67 Swedish newspapers as the church prepared for national, regional and local church elections this month.

"The purpose is to present the church to the public in advance of the church's general elections," said Anneli Dufva, press secretary at the archbishop's office.

The elections were held on

September 18. All 7.2 million members of the church over 16 years of age were allowed to vote, but in the last elections in 2001 only 14 per cent of the electorate took part. The church hopes the advertising campaign will increase turnout.

The first advertisements were published at the end of August and a second series appeared a few days before the elections, to encourage as many voters as possible to participate.

"The main purpose is not to recruit new members, but to raise knowledge

about the church and what we can offer," Dufva told Ecumenical News International.

The elections were for directly-elected parish councils, associations of parishes, the diocesan councils and for the church assembly, the highest decision-making body of the Church of Sweden.

Candidates stand as individuals, although some belong to political parties, and others to specially-formed ad-hoc groups. In all there were more than 47,000 people standing for election.

Ethics

Christian philosophers address the tough subject of ethics

Ralph W. Vunderink

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – It was time for another get together. The third International Symposium of Christian Philosophers was held again in Hoeven, a village in the Dutch province of North Brabant, near the northern Belgium border on August 15-19, 2005. The chosen site was, formerly a Cistercian cloister dating back to the Middle Ages, at present a resort for conferences; some of its Catholic influences still lingered as the Latin inscription near the pinnacle of the front entrance testified: in corde regnes omnium or “May you [God] reign in the heart[s] of all.”

Hoeven was an ideal choice. It has a quiet southern atmosphere away from Holland’s northern hustle and bustle and is conducive to reflection and meditation. And its country air breathes occasionally a measure of rustic aroma.

Over one hundred people came, from all five continents, as far away as from Australia. It was truly an international gathering. Many actively participated, giving speeches or providing workshops, others represented Dutch newspapers, while still others came just for a day or so to check the place out. One came to greet his uncle who came from another continent. He succeeded in finding him.

Among those invited to speak at the symposium was Piet H. Donner, the Dutch Minister of Justice, who spoke the opening words. While the Dutch, as he explained, have become extremely tolerant of various forms of ethical behavior, there remains some confusion about, for instance, the practice of artificial insemination, whether it should be an option for young women alone or also for older women. Donner pleaded for grounding various ethical values, a subject the Dutch recently began to debate, in justice, exemplified by blind-folded lady justice. He concluded with noting a tension between personal freedom of choice, and thus a great diversity of ethical perspectives, and social responsibility to a world in which the molding authority of the Christian Church and the universities has all but ceased.

Philosophy and god

Speaker of the second of four plenary sessions was philosopher John Hare, a transplant from Calvin College to Yale University who just before his turn to speak took the time to read the headlines of a Dutch news paper. He outlined two current British ethical traditions – the emotive or personal acceptance or rejection of ethical claims and the objectively true – roughly similar to subjective or objective ethics. Hare then linked his “realism” to religious ethics, to the notions of “good and bad,” and “right and wrong.” In the former case God draws us toward himself in love, while in the latter case God is obeyed by his creatures.

Hare’s claim that people can discuss “realism” ethics without taking recourse to

the Christian ethics of love and duty elicited questions like how people can agree with one another in the former realm but not in the latter, or how one moves philosophically from “realism” to the Christian faith, and how. Readers of *CC* may not know who the cited philosophers like Aquinas, Scotus, and Kant are, but they may have encountered similar obstacles lying in the way of living their Christian faith in a non-Christian world or connecting Christian faith and secular culture.

The panel discussions centered on more specific ethical topics: education and the family, education and learning, business ethics, social work, media and mass communication, and political ethics. Truly, the field of ethics has many ramifications.

The Symposium, I was happy to note as a former caregiver, made room for a session on the ethics of care, in which three participants from three different countries – America, the Netherlands, and South Africa – took part. The Dutch, incidentally, decided to give people with disabilities their deserved dignity at least sixty years before the Americans did. Of concern was the observation that health nurses trained in Christian values at a Dutch College of Care often lose these attitudes once they are on the job and that the role of finances and implementation of policies, institutions of care often dwarf genuine care of residents.



Timely reminder

Gerrit Glas, a Dutch Christian psychiatrist, reminded in a plenary session that Herman Dooyeweerd, one of the two founders of the original Society of Reformed Philosophers, had made great strides in articulating the creation aspect of his Christian philosophy, but showed “a relative neglect for the issue of evil and of reconciliation,” the other two pillars of his Christian viewpoint. “Christians cannot afford to abstain from philosophical reflection

on the nature, the transmission and the battle against evil,” Glas continued. “Evil itself can settle down in innocence; its favorite path of transmission is-often-plain denial” (e.g., the Nazis). He urged Christian intellectuals no longer to ignore the “results of biblical scholarship,” and to accept the “help of theologians in their reflection on normative issues in the life sciences and the great cultural debates of our time.”

Time Out

While the program was spirited, at times even heavy, there was time for group devotions, which were held in the library, not in the chapel as during the previous two times. In one of them Psalm

Pictures of the Bovendonk Conference centre in Hoeven



As we were about to embark on the Wednesday afternoon excursion, one participant asked if the price of this cultural event was included in the package. He was told it was. When it became apparent he belonged to a tight-fisted ethnic community, several smiles surfaced.

A concluding question

I have reserved the name of the speaker of the first plenary session for my conclusion, mindful of Scripture’s injunction that the first shall be last. Philosopher Richard Mouw, at present president of Fuller Theological Seminary, in

19:1-4a – the heavens declare God’s glory (though not the way human beings communicate) and the universe reflects its Creator, day by day – was explained. The audience was given time to think of the message while listening to a religious aria composed by Johan S. Bach, before singing Charles Wesley’s hymn about the Savior’s redemptive love: “And can it be.” The evening before, we sang a new translation by Calvin Seerveld of Psalm 8 about the place of humans in God’s majestic creation.

As opportunities presented themselves, those attending renewed old friendships and made new ones. There was an active buzzing in the air, during eating times, perhaps even more so during the late evening accompanied by a glass of Heineken. But it was easier at times to speak ethically than to act ethically. For several philosophers were tempted to disregard one reasonable request by the coordinator of the Symposium – that the workshops be limited to ten participants in each, so all presenters would have an equal number of listeners.

Amid the intellectual gymnastics, there were at least two humorous moments. The abbreviation ARP raised some eyebrows,

California, shared with us his own pilgrimage from a kind of pietism he inherited from his grandparents which emphasized “a very personal relationship with God that was coupled with a fear of the influence of “worldliness” to a discovery of Abraham Kuyper’s adage of Christ’s kingly rule over all spheres of life. This amounted to a change from a Christ-inspired discipleship rejecting all non-Christian ethical patterns to an ethics transforming culture from within. As I listened to his personal account, I wondered how deep this tension between an ethics rejecting culture and one transforming it still is in the Calvinistic community. In North America the CRC saw first (1834) the so-called afscheiding—a separation from the world – and much later the doleantie – a redemption of culture, which eventually led, among other things, to the establishing of a Christian labor organization in Canada. Do we still witness this tension among us? Or do we listen to Christ’s command – an echo from the Old Testament – to love God as well as the neighbor wherever this leads us?

Dr. Ralph Vunderink is a senior lecturer of philosophy and humanities at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

World

Murder in London: A Wake-up Call?

Harry Antonides

The greatest danger is that we fail to face up to the nature of the threat we are dealing with. What we witnessed in London on July 7 was not an aberrant act.... What we are confronting here is an evil ideology.... But is a global struggle and it is a battle of ideas, hearts and minds, both within Islam and outside it. (Prime Minister Tony Blair, July 16, 2005)

Britain, which genially granted refugee status to endangered newcomers and let them encourage violence, is now wondering whether good heartedness has become a form of national suicide. (Robert Fulford, National Post, September 10, 2005)

The terrorist attack on Londoners on their way to work on the morning of July 7 deeply shocked the British people. Initially, the public response was one of outrage as well as a sense of solidarity with the victims and their families.

But this horrendous event also brought to the surface confusion and division within the British people. There is deep unease about the fact the killers were British citizens. How could they do something so evil? Is Britain not a place where many cultures live side by side and where all are welcomed and treated with respect and tolerance?

For many it was hard to admit that their cherished multicultural ideals lay in tatters. Others saw in this event justification for their opposition to the American-led war against terrorism. They argued that the bombers were merely expressing their righteous indignation about the wrong they claim is done to them by the West, especially the U.S.

And so the soul-searching goes on, exposing deep cracks within the fabric of British society. What lies behind the London attack and the different, even conflicting ways in which the British are trying to make sense out of this event?

A covenant of security?

The first thing that springs to mind is the indifference the British authorities and public have shown towards the formation of a fanatic cadre of Islamic extremists in their midst. The formative centres of these unassimilated Muslims are the mosques where firebrand imams preach a doctrine of hatred

towards the British people and its institutions.

Some of the leading radicals have not hidden their true intention.

The Finsbury Park mosque in London has long been a centre of radicalism where its former imam Abu Hamza al-Masri openly preached violence until his arrest in April 2004.

The Islamist British group Al-Muhajiroun (the immigrants) has publicly stated that Britain is immune from Islamist violence as long as its behavior towards Muslims is acceptable. One of its spokesmen, Sayful Islam, said in an interview that he fully supported Osama bin Laden in the quest to achieve "the worldwide domination of Islam." But he himself would not engage in terrorist acts in Britain. He was however not necessarily against such acts, as he explained:

When a bomb attack happens here, I won't be against it, even if it kills my own children.... But it is against Islam for me to engage personally in acts of terrorism in the U.K. because I live here. According to Islam, I have a covenant of security with the U.K., as long as they allow us Muslims to live here in peace.... If we want to engage in terrorism, we would have to leave the country. It is against Islam to do otherwise.

Extremist Sheik Omar Bakri Mohammed has called on young Muslims to join the terrorists in Iraq. While serving as the head of Al Muhajiroun, he confirmed the existence of a "covenant of security," which according to him is rooted in Koranic teaching. He stated that this would make an attack by British Muslims unlikely. But early this year he announced that this covenant had ended because of anti-terrorist legislation, which has the result that the whole of Britain has now become *Dar ul-harb*, that is, a target for Muslim domination in which "the Kuffar [unbeliever] has no sanctity for their own life or property."

To renew this so-called covenant of security, British authorities must repeal that legislation and release those detained without trial. If this does not happen, Mohammed said that British Muslims must "join the global Islamic camp against the global crusade camp."

Mohammed minced no words in clarifying his intention: "The response from the Muslims will be

horrendous if the British government continues in the way it treats Muslims." He threatened that unless Western governments change course, Muslims will "give them a 9/11 day after day after day."

When questioned more closely, Mohammed seemed to draw back from his threat, but he still allowed himself to say that for him, "the life of an unbeliever has no value." This is the same man who 19 years ago was given asylum in England and received public assistance. When asked how he felt about being banned from British citizenship, he replied: "I don't want to become a citizen of hell." (He has now left Britain, and will not be allowed back in the country.)

A blind generosity

Warnings against the easy-going attitude of the British authorities have also come from Muslim writers close to the terrorist training grounds. Al-Rahman Al Rashed, a Muslim who manages a Dubai-based news channel, has for ten years warned Britain that its policies of making known terrorists feel at home is absurd. He explained that this "blind generosity" has enabled advocates of fascism in that country to establish mosques and schools where young people are poisoned by a fanatic zeal that drove the killers on July 7. Three of them were British-born, all were British citizens.

Khaled Ahmed, columnist with the Pakistani *Friday Times* news-weekly has been a harsh critic of radical Islamists in that part of the world. He also warned the British that the Muslim community in the U.K. has the potential to breed extremism here as well as in Pakistan. In a recent interview he said: "In the U.K. and even in the U.S. – and in Canada too – you have to listen more carefully to what is being said inside the mosque."

A joint Home Office and Foreign Office dossier prepared last year said that Britain may now be harboring as many as 16,000 potential terrorists and supporters of al-Qaeda. Counter terrorism officials estimate that as many as 600 of them have trained in camps run by al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Even after the July 7 attack, some Muslim spokespeople continued their anti-British rhetoric. Abu Abdullah, a preacher and leader of the radical group Supporters of Sharia, criticized Prime

Minister Tony Blair for saying that the attack in London was the work of Islamic terrorists.

Abdullah also said that those who re-elected Mr. Blair "have blood on their hands" because British soldiers are killing Muslims. He even raised the preposterous suggestion that the British government was behind the bombings because they "want to go on with their fight against Islam."

Many more such overt threats are now part of the public record and available to all who want to know. In addition, recent polls among British Muslims have confirmed that a large number of them feel no attachment to Britain, and that six per cent (of an estimated 1.6 million Muslims) believe that the July 7 terrorists were justified.

These opinions and findings are the fruit of a "liberal" mindset that has elevated multiculturalism to a new principle of enlightened government. Consequently, authorities have refused requests from the U.S., France, Spain, and Morocco to extradite some well-known terrorists. The British highest court overturned legislation passed after 9/11 that would have allowed indefinite detention of terrorism suspects, as a violation of human rights law.

Early this year Parliament considered a bill that would have allowed tough controls on terror suspects – house arrests, curfews, and electronic tagging. It was stalled because some members objected that it would erode civil liberties. One member of the House of Commons said that this bill "is liable to create further trouble and dissension among those whom we are seeking to control – the terrorists."

A more telling statement about a fanatic refusal to face reality by British lawmakers must be hard to find. If you want to know what is the real problem in Britain today, here is a powerful clue.

Signs of change

Yet, there are some signs of change in that more have begun to speak out in Britain about the need to stand up to those Islamist leaders who systematically abuse their authority with deadly consequences. (Most encouraging is the fact that more moderate Muslims have begun to condemn those who in the name of Allah spread hatred and death.)

Ann Cryer, Labour Member of



Muslim child celebrates radical imams

the British Parliament, wrote that there is a glimmer of hope that it is now possible for taboo topics to be discussed in the U.K. She said that "the teaching of a perverse interpretation in some of Britain's Muslim communities – which fuels hatred, describes non-believers as "infidels" and breeds suicide bombers – is absolutely unacceptable."

On this score, Prime Minister Tony Blair has been clear, and he has not been afraid to name the enemy: Islamic teachers and leaders who stoke the fires of hatred and violence. In a speech shortly after the attack of July 7, he said:

The roots of this ideology are rooted in the madrasses in Pakistan, in the extreme forms of Wahabi doctrine in Saudi Arabia, in the former training camps of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, in the cauldron of Chechnya, in the extremist minority that now preach hatred in every European city of the West. This is what we are up against. It cannot be beaten except by confronting it, symptoms and causes, head-on. Without compromise and without delusion.

The Canadian scene

What about the situation in Canada? Are we, notably the political authorities and other elites, prepared seriously to pursue hitherto taboo subjects, such as the presence of terrorists and their enablers in Canada, the super sensitivity of a vocal Muslim leadership that is ready to pounce on any one who disagrees with them, the prevalence of a sacrosanct multicultural ideology ready to condemn those who depart from the politically correct line, an overhaul of our immigration and refugees policies? And this is only the short list.

I am not so sure. Yes, there is more talk about the dangers, even the admission by our Minister of Public Safety, Anne McClellan,

Continued on p. 12...

Theology

What have you done with God? What have you done with man?

Two more heresies

Arie C. Leder

"What have you done with God?" is the central question the church should ask everyone it encounters in its missionary endeavors, according to missiologist J. H. Bavinck (*The Science of Missions* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968,]). God, not man, is the central issue in the gospel. Bavinck then goes on to describe four basic kinds of answers: God is, etc.

Mega-church evangelism of recent vintage tends to focus the question on the human person: problems of self-esteem, the power of possibility, good things will come your way – your full potential. "What have you done with . . . Yourself?" is gaining in favor as the central missiological issue.

Strange as it may seem, these questions point to an old religious problem: Who is God, especially in the person of Jesus Christ? And, who is man, especially given the nature of sin? Depending on how you answer these questions your belief may be orthodox or heretical. The first question picks up on the heresy known as Arianism, the second on Pelagianism.

God as a really, really, good guy

How do you talk about Jesus Christ as God? You don't, argued Arius. God is so totally other, so transcendent, that he cannot share himself, his essence with anyone else. Therefore, the notion that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son is nonsense. Jesus Christ is "the firstborn of all creation," he was fond of quoting Colossians 1:15. Christ was a very high functioning, top of the pile, also divine, human being. More than a real human being, less than true God.

For many, Arius' arguments made a lot of sense. Of course God cannot become human; God is totally Other, truly transcendent. A real god could not be truly a man. So convincing was Arius that its form of Christianity grew by leaps and bounds.

But Arius' god did not, that god could not communicate himself to man. That is,

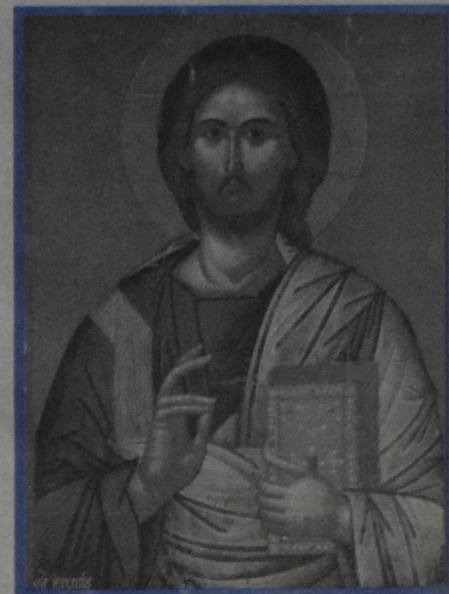
Jesus could not be God incarnate. And if that was the case, then there was no real Gospel, no God giving of himself. Only a really, really good guy who showed the way. Thus, at the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) the church declared Arianism heretical, the wrong choice. God, they affirmed, truly became human, a man born in Bethlehem.

The challenge for the church was to explain Jesus' "fromness," says Timothy George (*The Pattern of Christian Truth*, 22) that is, that Jesus not only came from God but also that he was God. We hear the controversy echoed in the Nicene Creed, where we confess that Christ is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father." Jesus Christ was a real man, but also truly God.

If you've ever heard a Jehovah's Witness tell you who Jesus is, you've met the Arian choice of reading Scripture. Like the Arians of old, they are frightfully successful evangelists. But they are not alone. The New Testament scholars who form the Jesus Seminar wear the mantle of Arius as well. They unearth this heretical inheritance by a form of textual archaeology which determines what the "real" words of Jesus are. In the process they discover that the historical Jesus was a really, really wise guy, but not God. That detail was added by the later redactions of the Gospel writers, in the interests of the church.

What did Arius do with God, the second person of the Trinity? Downsized him into a super human. That still makes sense to a lot of people today. God is like one of us, really; but not really God, not transcendent.

As with all heretics, Arius has helped the church understand as crucial doctrine: the Trinity. The Trinity, writes George, "belongs to the pattern of Christian truth because without it we cannot really understand the narrative of Jesus as the story of God, and



Christ Pantocrator – Portable icon work of Jeremiah Paladas, early 17th century

if the story of Jesus is ultimately anything other than the story of God, there is no Gospel. The doctrine of the Trinity is necessary for understanding the Bible's overarching account of what God has said and done in history. Such a framework makes the Scriptures not just a disparate collection of interesting documents from the world of antiquity, but one single unitary Bible. It allows us to use the word "Scripture" as a singular, collective noun. This is a lesson Arius has helped us to learn." (23)

A snake from the Garden of Eden

Who is man that God is mindful of him, asks the psalmist? (Ps. 8) If he works hard enough, declared Pelagius: discipline your life's potential and possibility and perfection is within human reach. He did not claim he had reached such perfection, nor that it was easy. But he did believe that, in addition to Jesus, there were perfect people – those who obeyed all of God's commands.

Pelagius, writes George, was upset with Augustine's view of humanity, especially as evident in the prayer: "O Lord, give what You command, and command whatever You will." George writes: "This kind of devotion, Pelagius thought, undercut the moral nerve of Christian faith. If we are not able to obey God's commandments by ourselves, then why had he given them in the first place? Salvation must come from the performance of good works and the fulfillment of obligations laid down by God." (23)

If you're thinking, "He sounds like Arminius," you're right. Arminius stands in that tradition: indeed, for both of them divine predestination is subordinate to divine foreknowledge of human activity. Pelagius' great opponent, Augustine, argued that humanity's condition is far worse than Pelagius imagined. "Only a supernatural work of God," writes George, "which comes to sinners from beyond themselves, can make any real difference in our standing before a holy God. Christians can indeed make great progress in their walk with God. . . . But sin is an ever-present reality with which we must

struggle until we draw our last breath." (24) Our end is determined not by our good works, but God's good pleasure.

What we see surfacing in Pelagius' doctrine of humanity is the initial temptation in the Garden of Eden: the invitation to something like God. What did Pelagius do with man? Elevated him to a status somewhat higher than of the angels. It still makes sense to many people today. Each one of us, really, has the potential to become right with God.

As with Arius, the church has learned from Pelagius' error: grace triumphs over sin, our works do not. George concludes: "Even though Pelagius was condemned as a heretic at the Council of Ephesus in 431, . . . his ideas continue to influence the way we understand the human situation, not only in the optimistic anthropology of liberal Protestantism and the lingering semi-Pelagianism of some Roman Catholics, but also in a sort of 'can-do' evangelicalism, which stresses positive thinking and self-improvement." (24)

Our contemporary choices

These ancient choices continue to be attractive today. To those of Reformed persuasion, Pelagianism in the form of Arminius' teachings, perhaps. Combined with what George calls "the semi-Pelagianism of . . . a sort of 'can-do' evangelicalism, which stresses positive thinking and self-improvement." Think of televangelist Joel Osteen. Pelagius in his contemporary forms continues to present a powerfully attractive, but unorthodox, choice. And, if we go far enough down that line of thinking, the Arian Jesus, a powerful teacher, a highly developed human being, but not God, may not be out of the running for a considered choice either.

So, what have we done with God? What have we done with man, the man Jesus?

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Murder in London ... continued from p.11

that the threats are real. She has publicly stated that our security agencies have warned that "there exists in this country those who might very well choose to do us harm." But instead of announcing a determined action plan to expose and defeat those who might do us harm, she said that Canadians should become more "psychologically prepared" for terrorist attacks than they now are.

The appalling truth is that our country is considered a choice hiding place for terrorists and their supporters. Our government has done plenty of talking about taking measures to protect us against attacks, but has done very little to safeguard our borders, find and expel potential terrorists and their enablers, including hate-inspiring Muslim leaders. It has dragged its feet to ban terrorist-supporting organizations, and to name the enemy that is now the major source of

terrorism in the world: extremist Muslim leaders who continue to preach Jihad against the democratic West.

It appears that our government and many Canadians live with the belief that we are protected by the so-called covenant of security. It is an illusion that dovetails well with the ingrained anti-Americanism in this country.

That covenant of security will prove to be as fraudulent for us Canadians as it was shown to be for the British when the bombs exploded in London on that awful summer morning.

At least, England has a Prime Minister with the courage and determination to face the truth.

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Reflections

Sundays in our family will never be the same

Lisa M. Petsche

It's not much to look at: an aging, otherwise unremarkable two-storey dwelling at the end of a potholed lane, barely visible from the highway. Surrounding it are rows of apple, cherry and pear trees, as well as currant bushes and a rhubarb patch that have seen better days. This was one of many orchards in the area, but now only a few remain, bordered by new housing subdivisions.

The fruit farm has been in my mother-in-law's family for well over half a century. She and seven siblings grew up there. Headed by their widowed mother, the family relied on the orchard as a primary source of income for many years.

My husband recalls spending many a weekend picking cherries with his cousins, under the watchful eye of Gran, and selling them at the local farmer's market.

By the late 1980s, only his Aunt Marjorie — caregiver to Gran in her later years — remained there.

A single woman, Marj took a special interest in her nieces and nephews as well as their offspring. She enjoyed attending family events and receiving updates from distant relatives by phone or mail.

She also enjoyed receiving visitors on



Sunday evenings, a tradition dating back to the time when her siblings began to move out and start families of their own.

Although there was a core of regulars, you never knew who might show up on Sunday night. It was quite a gathering spot. Adults would sit around the kitchen table debating, sharing news and reminiscing, while their kids played outside or in the front room, depending on the weather.

Our family made the trip once or twice a month — more often in summer. The kids loved to run around the backyard and orchard, chasing rabbits and playing football and hide and seek. They would listen for approaching freight trains along the adjacent railway tracks, which invariably inspired a

race to the nearest clearing to count the number of cars clattering by. (Until recently, every time our son saw or heard a train, no matter where it was, he'd exclaim, "There goes Aunt Marjorie's train!")

Outdoor activities were always followed by refreshments. A generous hostess, Marj would set out cheese and crackers, fruit and cookies, and sometimes potato chips or candies. The adults drank coffee or tea while the children sipped apple juice in small, striped glasses — a novelty for our brood, who at home had to settle for plastic cups. The kids then retreated to a corner of the kitchen, delving into a carton of second-generation toys, or played cards and charades in the living room until it was time to head back to the city.

Like my late grandmother's home, the farm was a family clearinghouse: photos were displayed throughout the main floor, and news of every kind — obtained through visits, phone calls and letters from as far away as England — was shared with all who came by.

In recent years, when Sunday night visi-

tors became fewer, Marj would indulge my keen interest in family history, bringing out dusty boxes filled with photos, letters (including wartime correspondence), invitations, obituaries and other newspaper clippings.

Family members did their best to help Marj age in place, maintaining the property inside and out and escorting her on errands and to medical appointments, as first her vision and then her general health deteriorated.

Eventually, though, she required a safer and more supportive environment. With great reluctance she moved to a retirement home, but didn't adapt well to institutional life.

She never gave up hope of returning to the family homestead.

Marj spent her final days in a hospital intensive care unit. Poor health made her passing a blessing. Fittingly, she was laid to rest in a cemetery overlooking the farm.

The house has since been emptied and the property sold to a housing developer. Soon the place won't be recognizable.

Our son asked if we had enough money to buy the farm, to prevent it from being demolished. He's perceptive enough to know Aunt Marjorie's recent death marks the end of an era. The gathering spot is gone. Sundays will never be the same.

Thanks, Gran and Marj, for the memories.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and a freelance journalist specializing in family life.

Things that fall from the sky

Christopher de Vinck

Things fall from heaven or from the oak trees. A novelist might describe the floating, soft descent of flowers, millions of flowers, landing on the grass and leaves and call the event an accumulation of snow, when in the end it is the imagination replacing grief or loneliness. What better way to overcome sorrow than with a blizzard of chrysanthemums and roses? In John Knowles' novel, *The Lord Of the Flies*, the wild boys discover a corpse entangled in ropes and a torn parachute. The children believe that they found a beast, or devil, some monster that they have to fear and placate with sacrifices and loathing, when in reality, what they discovered was a dead man, a British pilot, a victim of war, something the children could not understand. Holy is the innocence in the face of death that is not placed in the context of old age. When I was a boy, I liked to catch the helicopter seeds from the maple trees as they whirled and whirled down in July. How much I liked splitting a seed open a bit and placing it on my nose and proclaim that I was Pinocchio.

Today I still like catching the maple seeds, and standing in the middle of a storm to tilt my head back and let the water splash against my face. Let us be cleansed with the water. I like to catch snowflakes

on my tongue, fill the bird feeder and watch the cardinals and blue jays float down from the sky and peck and call out in the joy of their discovery.

I am sorry that we no longer toss rice in the air at weddings. Remember the feel of the hard grain in our hands as we waited for the bride and groom to exit from the church? Remember the great fun it was to release the white rice from our hands and watch, in near slow motion, the sudden blizzard of luck showered down upon the couple, bouncing off the bride's veil, sticking to the groom's hair as they both laughed and laughed?

We are pelted with hail. Violent winds destroy cities and towns. The sky is falling. The sky is falling cried Chicken Little. Dew descends like bits of diamond on the blades of grass as we sleep.

What is our lasting joy? What place does the sun have in our dreams? Or the moon? They both fall into the horizon, the great clock, the gears of our lives turning and turning as we are under the barrage of things that befall upon us.

What is our fate? What place do we call our destiny?

Last night, after I stopped writing, I stood up from my desk and walked to the French door to my right that leads out to the deck. I have a small thermometer on one window

and I wanted to check the night temperature, which I do each night for no reason except perhaps to maintain a sense of order.

Sixty-six degrees. A cool night. I looked out into the darkness, and just beyond the soft dime light from my desk lamp, I saw an object on the deck. I walked to the kitchen, found the flashlight, then walked outside.

I flicked on the flashlight, its yellow beam jiggled against the brown, deck floor. I walked to what I thought was a large leaf. It was a young squirrel, sprawled out on the hard wood, blood oozing from its mouth. The animal was dead, having fallen out of its nest of leaves and dry grass perched high above the house.

I looked at the small, thin tail, the plump legs and belly. A gray squirrel, silk squirrel, swollen with death despite its sharp claws and lubricated eyes.

What descends as a veil upon our lives each day? Yes, death, of course death, the

endgame. Some might fear the lodging of the grave, fear the strife that comes with age, and fear the dwindling, waking days. A squirrel falls from its nest and no one hears it smashing against the hard wood deck.

I do not know the landscape of heaven. Maybe in heaven it snows chrysanthemums. Maybe we are given a flashlight to find our way in the dark. I want to calculate the temperature in heaven, especially in the late evening. To me heaven does not have ashes and hailstorms. Heaven is a place, when you have to come, you are invited to catch maple seeds twirling down in a July afternoon just before you go out for an ice-cream cone. In my heaven it rains rice, and not dead pilots and little squirrels. I would be a happy gypsy in heaven, coming in with my little family in a caravan with pots clanging against the sides of our wagons for the evening supper and dance at the great fire. We might not know the full triumph of heaven in

our time, but such victory is always at hand, perhaps just beyond our reach, but there just the same as we lean out the window and catch the falling roses and floating chrysanthemums.



Ecclesiastes

Language is being emptied of meaning

A. A. van Ruler

Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God. (NIV)

For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God. (KJV)

Ecclesiastes 5:7

Here the Preacher draws attention to human speech. Our capacity for speech is an unspeakably great gift and also an unspeakably great mystery. The stones cannot speak, and neither can the plants and the animals. But we can.

We express ourselves in our speech. And through it we create community with others. It also enables us to represent reality. Only when we can name things do we really know them. And finally it is speech that creates a relationship with God.

We not only have been created by the Word along with all things; we are also created in the Word. Our relationship to God is a Word-relationship.

In speaking we come to our true existence, for it is to step out of ourselves. True ecstasy is to rise above one's selfhood. Genuine transcendence is to get beyond our selves. A person who speaks, who speaks authentically, makes contact with God.

But we must be careful in this regard, warns the Preacher. The highest good corrupted makes the greatest evil. This unspeakably great gift of language is open to corruption. The emptiness of existence can also creep into our words. We sometimes speak idle, empty, foolish words, words without content. We prattle on. We use our words without thinking, carelessly, just to be talking. We don't always mean what we say; in fact, at times we hardly know what we are saying. The content of our own words doesn't even sink into us as we are speaking.

There is so much talk, so many words. We seem to think that we must keep on piling up words — the more the better. We repeat ourselves endlessly. We seem to think that words as such will do the job. By multiplying words we try to conceal from ourselves their emptiness.

In this way, chattering endlessly on, we bypass ourselves and our



This painting, titled "An experiment on a bird in the air pump," by the 18th century English painter Joseph Wright dramatizes a story. A scientific experiment that threatens the life of a bird is performed in a setting that breaks the usual sterile boundaries of the laboratory. Along with the scientists are children more concerned about the bird than the experiment and a young couple making eyes at one another. Van Ruler points out that our quest for a Christian lifestyle is like the scientist's search for the right language and the painter's search for the right image and the writer's search for the right word.

own existence. We get so caught up in existence, extasis and transcendence, that we lose ourselves in the idle repetition of words. In the process, our existence and transcendence, that is, our stepping outside of ourselves and reaching beyond ourselves is turned into its very opposite.

Reality turns into a dream. The Preacher is here saying that the corruption of what is greatest produces the worst. "Much dreaming and many words are meaningless."

He introduced this comparison in verse 3, citing a proverb that was probably current at the time: "As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words." (NIV) [For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. (KJV)] At the heart of the matter is the quantity of our words.

The day has been busy and bustling, we have been so overloaded by the experiences and activities of the day that they bother us far into the night. It is time to sleep. We should be resting in the arms of our Creator from the busyness of being. But the day's realities invade our nightly rest. Our restlessness does not go away; we are beset by dreams.

This is how it goes with words,

suggests this proverb. Just as dreams are the result of much busyness, so foolish talk is the result of many words. Those who want to be always talking end up using words just to hear themselves talk. Such a person doesn't think before he speaks, so his words become idle chatter.

Yet, the emptiness of speech is not just located in speaking too much. It is also located in emptiness as such. Eventually our speech becomes as empty as a dream. A dream is fleeting, hard to grasp. It is related to reality, but is not itself real. Similarly, human existence, extasis and transcendence can all turn into a mere dream. Even God himself becomes a figment of our dreams, devoid of any reality.

**"As a dream comes
when there are many
cares,
so the speech
of a fool when
there are many words."**

This is the result of talking too much about God. We can talk God to death. We presume to capture him in the web of our many words. This can also be true of the many words we speak inwardly, our images and reflections. With these,

too, we seek to capture God and pin him down. But that is foolish talk. As Emil Brunner puts it: anyone who thinks he can conceptualize God is mad. We must allow God to be himself.

But we must also be ready to be ourselves before God. We must speak to God and with God in our prayers, our praise, our confessions and in our witness. And we must do so soberly and reverently, attentively and seriously. Our traditions and the church provide us with core words. The simple rules of speech are given us in the dogma, the teachings of the church. These are formulas we may use.

But this text isn't just about the use of words in religion. There we have long heard warnings about the empty use of many words. But I think this is true of all reality and of all of life. In everything we are standing before the face of God. Being is holy in its totality. And therefore all our speaking about everything is of equal importance, and it, too, is threatened by the same dangers.

The sciences, and culture in general, are important in part because they teach us to be precise in our use of words. Our math and science teachers taught us not to speak carelessly, but to be economical in our use of words and to always use the right word.

But this is as true of the arts as

of the sciences. The arts introduce style into reality as well as into our inner lives. They induce us — in a thousand different ways — to seek to represent things as they are.

But even aside from the arts and sciences, there is experience, maturity and the inner culture of the heart. They also provide soil in which attentiveness, receptivity, care, reticence, gentleness and precision can grow. These enable us to say precisely what needs to be said in as few words as possible.

The Preacher, however, does not point to the arts and sciences and inward culture. He penetrates to the roots of all of these. He says, "Therefore, stand in awe of [fear] God." This is what is most necessary: people must respect God. He is our Creator. He does things in his own sovereign way, and we are but creatures.

We may join in the conversation, just as we may also participate in his doing and willing and knowing. But our speaking is a matter of speaking with. We must not think that we have the first and last word. The first word is always God's. It is the word of creation. His, too, is the last word. It is the word of the last judgment and of the consummation of all things. In between we may also speak some words, but if we talk too much, then everything turns into a mere dream. When we use the right words, however, they turn into a song of praise.

Stewardship

Federal Budget ... continued from page 5

must be aware of the different needs of diverse people, communities and organizations and balance and promote their public claims so that each may have the freedom to fulfill their God-given calling and responsibilities without oppression either from the authorities or from one another." (Cf. CPJ's *Guidelines for Christian Political Service*, II, A, 4)

Trudeau on "the worship of nothing"

Former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau also criticized, "the twentieth century devotion to material gain" and the use of "economic criteria" to the exclusion of almost all others as the measurement of individual achievement and of government performance. In his convocation address at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina on 12 May 1974, Mr. Trudeau strongly opposed the wide-spread obsession with measuring life in terms of material prosperity: "The Gross National Product is no measurement of social justice, or human dignity, or cultural attainment. Yet in the absence of reliable social indicators we elect governments, formulate foreign policies, offer advice to the world at large – all on the assumption that economic growth is not only an attribute of the good life but is in fact its guarantor."

"So indiscriminate are our values that we allow ourselves to be directed by govern-ments on the single assumption that the expenditure of money is a measure of happiness. Yet what does growth of the GNP do to or reduce the extent of delinquency in juveniles, corruption in government, monopoly in business, stagnancy in cultural activity, limitation in educational opportunity, pollution, in our environment? What solutions does it offer to the presence of violence, or to the absence of beauty? Bluntly stated, it does nothing.

"Nevertheless, it is this 'nothing' that directs our lives. It is this 'nothing' that ridicules all too often the warnings of conservationists and the admonitions of theologians. It is this 'nothing' that we have the effrontery to export to the newly independent countries under the guise of foreign aid. It is this 'nothing' that we have come to worship even as we suspect its falsity and its perversity. This 'nothing' we clothe all too often with attractive descriptions: 'progress', 'modernity', 'achievement'. As do so, we admit our woeful weakness in the quality of our words, of our attitudes, and of our actions.

"Our definition of the good life has become inextricably intertwined with abundance. Abundance which invites waste and obsolescence; which forgives tawdriness and self-indulgence."

Mr. Trudeau then argued that we must "expand our consciousness and our attitude, re-examine our value system, discount the worth of purely economic factors as an evaluation of the human condition" and "replace these with standards which will measure not Gross National Product but Net Human Benefit." He called for "a new ethic" and "enlightened conduct" and concluded by reminding his audience that "we are all accountable" and that "none of us can escape the burden of our ethic."

Many Canadians expect our MPs to engage each other and the public in creative thinking, and promote effective actions (which include budget commitments) to show that Ottawa is capable of courageous initiatives to make Canada, once again, become a visionary leader determined to act for the common good, both nationally and internationally.

Martin on "cornerstones of a civil society"

As Paul Martin, the former Finance Minister once declared: "Canadians look to their government to be more than a keeper of good books. They want it to safeguard a caring community. It is a community that holds there are certain fundamental rights more important than privilege and the pocket book; that fairness and compassion are not secondary, but are in fact the cornerstones of a civil society."

Well said, Mr. Martin. Now, let's launch some new national priorities!

Gerald Vandezande C.M.

Developing Talents

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."
Romans 12: 6-8 [NIV]

God in his wisdom has blessed us with diversity, even though we are all equal under his sight and created in his image. Each of us is unique and has been given a particular subset of skills, abilities and aptitudes. It's when we discover and work within our areas of giftedness that we find contentment and joy in serving.

That can happen even later in life. For instance, I'm just amazed at what's happened in the last four years in the life of my wife Edith. Our home is now flooded with her artistic creativity in folk art, stained glass works and floral arrangements. Many former strangers, non-Christians and Christians, now make it to our home to take classes with her and she regularly teaches at Conestoga College, at Michaels Craft Store, and even occasionally at our public library. It has become a blessing to interact with people who otherwise we would not have met, and it's a privilege to be ready with a testimony of what God has done in our lives.

Yet Edith didn't come to this development of her talents until well into her forties! Why?

As a child, Edith struggled through grade school. It seemed that her way of learning didn't jibe with the typical approach to school. Edith is very visually orientated and she simply loved art in school. She enjoyed decorating but that was deemed by her parents and teachers not to have practical value. "You can't make a good income being an artist," she was consistently told. Out of high school, Edith wanted to go into interior decorating and design but was steered away from it and instead pursued a course of study in Criminology. There would always be employment for a policewoman – a more practical vocation that was sure to generate a reliable income! But her hopes of becoming a police officer were dashed by the physical requirements – she wasn't tall enough. She graduated and went home looking for a job. While she was searching, she met me. It wasn't too long thereafter that we married and set off for Bangladesh (I became her job).

It wasn't until our children were all out of the house going to college and beginning their respective careers, that she took the opportunity to pick up a few folk art and stained glass courses at nearby Conestoga College. Things have not been the same since. Our home now has

a studio and an art classroom. Edith regularly spends days and evenings teaching and decorating while interfacing with her students. It's been a joy to listen and share our life's stories with theirs – and the opportunities for witness have been natural and many. At least one of her students now regularly attends "Coffeebreak" – and calls the "Coffeebreak" meeting her church.

What's the point of telling this story? It's this: help our children to explore and discover what their gifts and their learning styles are, and challenge them to develop those gifts – that would be good stewardship. Don't let the worldly, income-orientated values influence their choices – but believe that all skills and abilities can be used to honor God and benefit his Kingdom enterprise. Encourage your children to develop their gifts. Invest in ways that will help them identify their skills, abilities and aptitudes. Then encourage them to develop their areas of giftedness. By so doing we help our children find satisfaction and contentment as they serve using their God-given gifts.

A young person came up to me once after I did a presentation about our work in Bangladesh. He was a student at a community college enrolled in a program of graphic design. He told me he wanted to serve – to help the poor. He said that he wanted to quit his course and sign up at a Bible college for mission work. I asked him why he had enrolled in graphic design. He showed me some of his work – it was obvious he enjoyed graphic design.

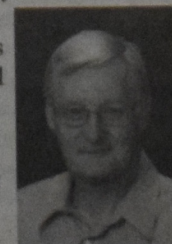
I suggested that he consider what is happening in Africa today with the huge problem of AIDS. I asked him "how do you think CRWRC and other organizations communicate to illiterate people about the root causes of AIDS, and educate them to avoid a lifestyle that encourages its spread?" Printed words don't work – but graphics and pictures have impact. Africa needs people who can design clever posters, bill boards, pamphlets that say it without words – much like a corporation today will spend thousands to design a logo or a phrase. God's kingdom work needs committed Christians who are skilled graphic designers, health care workers, agriculturists, mechanics, accountants, administrators and more.

Stewardly Tip: Consider how you can help your children discover their gifts: music, arts, sciences, fine motor skills, crafts etc. Take them to the science centre for hands on experiences, Grandpa's workshop, carving, painting classes, programming computer games rather than playing them, and other opportunities. Note what interests them and choose gifts that will help develop their abilities and interests.

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Driver's Wanted: Being Intentional About Stewardship

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Connecting
donors,
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Mission

Gazeti Daktari (Swahili for doctor's newsletter)

Rob Greidanus

This last weekend I was the only daktari at Kapsowar hospital, which was somewhat intimidating. I have been quoting a phrase frequently these days "God will not give me more than I can bear". Maybe it is because of some inner doubt, that I keep repeating this. However, once again, his grace has been sufficient to help me endure the trials I faced this past week.

Saturday morning on rounds, a small child aged two deteriorated in front of my eyes. He was admitted the day before after being sick for several days. On arrival he had classic findings of meningitis.

He became unresponsive overnight despite us using our most precious of antibiotics, ceftriaxone. Suddenly, he stopped breathing while we were on the ward doing rounds. Although they don't run "codes" in Kapsowar often, I refused to let him go that easily and started resuscitating him as I would back in Canada.

After intubating and ventilating him, his heart beat returned and soon there was some spontaneous respiratory effort. There is no ventilator here and no ICU to maintain what we started. I observed his heart stop two more times over the next hour and after using several resuscitation medications, we revived his vital signs once again. However, we soon realized our efforts would be futile.

I knew what I would do back in Canada – hang an inotrope drip, ventilate him, and medivac him to a big city peds ICU where he would have every possible resource poured into him. Here, our only hope was that he would spontaneously start breathing and the limited medicines we had available would miraculously heal him.

It soon became obvious that no such miracle would happen this day. His pupils became fixed and dilated and his vital signs deteriorated once again. I discussed the situation with his family and together we made the difficult decision to cease our efforts. We placed him in his grandmother's arms and removed the endotracheal tube. Predictably, his weak breathing efforts soon waned and his heart stopped for the last time.

The nursing staff and I shared some tears with his family, prayed together and expressed our sorrow at their loss.

There was a silent pause and then, in what seemed to be an angry tone, the grandmother looked me in the eye and spoke from her heart in Swahili phrases I did not understand. I asked what she was saying and the nurse translated – "Don't be sorry, you did everything you possibly could, more than we could have asked for. Thank you for your efforts. God has taken him. Don't say sorry!"



The surroundings at Kapsowar hospital

It was the first time I have been consoled in such a way.

Saturday night

I got called late in the evening that a lady with twins had just shown up fully dilated, pushing, and that one of the baby's legs was presenting down the birth canal. I ran to the hospital as they called the theatre staff and were preparing her for an urgent caesarian section.

I met the patient and staff halfway up the hill to the theatre (the o.r. is up a fairly steep hill on a paved path about 300 m. from the maternity ward). As I greeted her in the dark, with my head lamp shining down, I recognized her from the week before.

She was HIV positive and I had booked her for an elective caesarian section to be done two days ago. Resources are limited here, so most people can not afford the anti-retroviral drugs that are proven effective at lowering the risk of the babies acquiring HIV from the mother. However, Kapsowar has a limited program of giving mothers nevirapine as a single dose in labor and then giving the baby one dose after birth. This has been shown to reduce HIV transmission to the infant from 30 percent (if nothing is done) to less than 10 percent. Elective caesarian delivery (if membranes are not ruptured) reduces HIV transmission rates to less than 5 percent.

This was the best option for her, especially because I knew that the presenting baby was breech a week prior. For unknown reasons (but suspected to be financial) she did not show up for her scheduled surgery and also didn't arrive in time to take her nevirapine.

As we arrived at the theatre, the doors were still locked and the staff was just arriving. Unfortunately, no one had a key to get into the o.r. building, so one of the male

nurses kicked in the side door which was not as securely locked (almost like he had done that before). As the nurses went to set up the surgical instruments I examined the patient.

As I lifted up her hospital gown, we saw two little baby feet sticking about eight inches out of the birth canal. I promptly repositioned the patient for vaginal delivery and prayed that the baby's head wouldn't get stuck or the twins wouldn't get intertangled (not uncommon with this presentation). Thankfully twin number one, a girl, came out smoothly and spontaneously crying. Well, I thought, since that worked so well, why doesn't twin number two come as a footling breech also? And so he did! We were all thankful that both were vigorous and appeared healthy for now. We proceeded to give the infants their dose of nevirapine and will pray they don't acquire HIV – time will tell.

Sunday night

The adventures continued. A young boy, aged 12, was running with a panga (Swahili for machete knife). Unfortunately, he tripped and the long blade pierced his left arm pit and drove up and out at the back of his neck. He arrived at the hospital from a remote area several hours later having lost over half of his blood volume. He was shocky, but thankfully responded to IV fluids poured in rapidly.

Examining his wounds I suspected he had a subclavian vessel injury in addition to a brachial plexus nerve injury. We had no blood available for transfusion and no fancy plasma expanders. I knew if I tried to locate the bleeding vessel under his clavicle he would probably bleed out and die in our hospital. We chose to put in two large bore IV lines, apply a good pressure dressing and promptly send him off to Eldoret, two

hours down the road where there was blood and a general surgeon. One of the medical students went along to watch over him and amazingly he lived to receive the surgery and transfusion he needed later that night.

Monday

It was my last day as solo doc this week. Just when I thought I was in the clear, the afternoon brought in a few more obstetrical complications. A lady presented in labor having not felt her baby move all day. Unfortunately, ultrasound confirmed my suspicion that this baby had died in the womb.

To make matters worse, she had a previous caesarian delivery and after observing her labor over the next several hours it became apparent she had obstructed labor and needed another caesarian.

As I was in the midst of this surgery, the maternity ward called up that a lady admitted a week earlier at 30 weeks gestation with placenta previa (placenta overlying the cervix) was contracting and bleeding profusely. I rushed through the first caesarian to receive this next patient.

Unfortunately, as we delivered this premature child it became obvious he had already been without proper oxygenation for some time as the placenta had abrupted. We tried desperately to resuscitate him but never did get a heart beat or spontaneous breathing efforts.

Discouraged, I went on to the outpatient department where several patients were waiting for me. One of them was a nine-month old boy who had persistent parotid gland swelling and intermittent fevers for the last two months. He was losing weight and had oral thrush.

His parents reported their health to be good. After some pre-test counseling I sent them to the lab where my fears and suspicions were proven to be true. I diagnosed this boy with advanced HIV and then had to inform the parents of this tragedy and the fact that almost certainly he acquired it from his mother (who almost certainly acquired it from her husband).

Emotionally and physically exhausted, I headed home. Alisa greeted me and asked "How was your day". I said, "Well, I just delivered two dead babies and diagnosed a nine-month old with HIV – how was yours?"

Later I had to apologize for my cynicism and bitterness. She has been very comforting and understanding as I wrestle with these difficult medical issues. I am thankful that I am not carrying this load alone.

As a couple, we are leaning on each other a lot these days. We are also aware that many are praying for us – for strength, stamina, and wisdom. We appreciate your prayers and encouragement so much.

Kip-Rop (rain man)

Rob Greidanus is a doctor from Peace River, Alberta serving as a medical missionary in Kenya, Africa

Pastoral Excellence



S U S T A I N I N G
Pastoral
E X C E L L E N C E

James C. Dekker

In "Leadership: A Working Definition," the Christian Reformed Church's Leadership Development Team calls its fourth leadership principle "confluence" (pp. 16-17). One of the Bible's most evocative biblical images is the river running through God's city in the new heavens and earth (Revelation 22), providing life and "healing for the nations." A healthy river is complex and lovely, bearing water, food, trade and commerce in churning currents to settlements and people downstream, finally emptying into a distant sea — only to start a new cycle all over again with ocean evaporation, wind carrying moisture and clouds dropping rain or snow on distant plains or mountain ranges.

Though necessary for life, rivers can also threaten it; only recall Hurricane Katrina bursting levees in New Orleans, turning the Mississippi River into a boiling, poison-reeking death swamp. Both ideas of the river metaphor are useful as we explore "confluence."

One can never step into the same river twice, because new water moves and currents keep shifting. Thus confluence is an unrepeatable, "coming together of leader, congregation, time, place, ministry, opportunity and resources that is a gift of God's Spirit to enable a leader and congregation to move forward together in realizing God's purposes" ("Leadership," p.16). Though neither search committee nor pastor can manipulate such convergence, we can train our minds and hearts to recognize factors likely to combine and flourish without getting lost in soul- and energy-wasting eddies.

Confluence developing upstream

In the always stimulating Seventh Day

A river runs through it: confluence for congregational leadership

Adventist magazine *Ministry*, Stanley E. Patterson notes the indispensable need for the "fruit of the Spirit [from Galatians 5] . . . for all who participate in the leadership process.... Loving behavior, as demonstrated through the fruit of the Spirit, is not an option for the spiritual leader. *It is an expectation [sic]*" ("Pastoral Ministry: Management or Spiritual Leadership," July-August, 2005, p. 10). Clearly, Patterson recognizes what the CRC Leadership Team and earlier articles here also emphasized: leadership does not exist in a vacuum, but is relational and must be built on sound character of both pastor and congregational leaders — staff, volunteers, governance bodies.

Duane Kelderman illustrates that principle poignantly: "[A certain] pastor and his wife have been effective leaders because they have never asked the congregation to do something they themselves haven't done.

A pastor who adopts two Down's Syndrome children, opens his home to strangers, weeps with the weak . . . has the credibility to call the congregation to dream dreams and see visions beyond the status quo" (Calvin Theological Seminary *Forum*, Fall, 2003, p.7). Thus, no search committee should even consider as candidate for pastor one who has not given public or private testimony of Christ-likeness in personal and professional life.

Again, the exemplary character of leadership is a necessary condition prior to the hope of a flourishing confluence of pastor and congregation. Confluence begins to develop in potential pastor and congregation far upstream of the actual time and place where they swirl together.

Patience to see confluence develop

Canal Street CRC is a large and growing city congregation born 30 years ago from a first-generation immigrant mother. Large at birth and blessed with capable, compassionate and often courageous pastors, Canal Street enjoyed several overlapping pastorates for almost all that time. Although neighboring churches suffered some of the CRCNA's most bruising schismatic battles during the 1990s, Canal Street, with sober, long-suffering leadership from both pastors and congregational governance bodies, managed to steer clear of the vicious rocks and cataracts of schism. Crippling quarrels and resulting distrust were not allowed to take root in the congregation through rigorous preaching, reflection and plain hard work on personal and spiritual relationships among members.

Some years after Canal Street bypassed those dangerous rapids, Canal Street found itself without a pastor for the first time in its

history. The congregation used the opportunity to refresh an almost ten-year-old ministry plan. As happens in basically healthy organizations, that process did not require a complete remodeling, but rather honest checking and inspection to insure that Canal Street was ready to keep sailing on God's river. An *ad hoc* committee from council and congregation reviewed the goals and results of individual ministries, re-worked staff job descriptions and tabled a report and strategy for future direction and staffing.

Yet, despite much serious planning by some committees and council, Canal Street still was run occasionally by a traditional buddy network rather than on deliberate, task-oriented, God-trusting commitments and procedures. One outside observer described its default mode of leadership as a "benevolent dictatorship." In such a scenario, closet leadership would exercise power patronizingly over council and pastor when touchy issues surfaced, such as capital expenditures, new staff hiring or relationships with local Christian schools. Ironically, just that kind of leadership had steered Canal Street past rocks of schism a decade earlier. Nevertheless, such powerful closet leaders did not always practice healthy relationship disciplines among themselves; thus unspoken, unresolved trust issues spurted up at awkward, sensitive times, occasioning mistrust and reluctance among members.

Such dangerous side currents are all too familiar and potentially damaging in many congregations. Yet they must not be allowed to continue in a church — like weird, but harmless old Uncle Fred lives benignly in an extended family. The best way to start learning how to run such hazardous currents is for courageous, official leadership to name them and then embrace and use the trust and authority given them by the congregation to steer a different course. To its credit, Canal Street's search committee did not gloss over such issues, but was ready to discuss them in conversations with pastoral candidates.

Learning future confluence by Holy Spirit's hindsight

So, using tools of analysis and planning adopted officially by the congregation and council, the committee met more than 100 times over a three-year period, and was twice frustrated after interviews and visits resulted in declines by two pastor candidates. But as confluence is a mysterious, not totally predictable characteristic of leadership, with the Holy Spirit's wind "blowing where it will," look what surprises God had in store of Canal Street.

The search committee returned to a candidate it had followed earlier. Before, that candidate could not consider moving, but with changing currents where he was working, relocation became feasible. Still, eventual confluence was not easily discernible;

both candidate and search committee had to work through serious questions about compatibility and competence. Several times for both pastor and committee, it looked like nothing would come of the interviews and visits. Finally, the pastor accepted the call — more on faith, hope and commitment than because of a sure-fire prior evidence of a "fit." But spiritual confluence goes beyond and deeper than human fit.

At the time of accepting the call to Canal Street, the pastor was leading a church half the size. He had never worked with a sizeable staff. Furthermore, in two churches the pastor and congregation had flowed fruitfully together for nearly a decade, then hit stubborn crosscurrents and eddies that resulted in amicable, but perhaps premature crew changes.

Many pastors and congregations want to bail out after — or worse, during — a trip down the first rapids, dodging problems with the claim, "It's time for fresh leadership." Such desperate substitutions disguise a fear to see a normal problem as a Spirit-given opportunity to learn needed lessons for growth and maturity — and thus aim for confluence. As a result, churches and pastors learn instead to develop bad habits early and repeat the same mistakes with greater disaster in the future. Possible confluence turns to a whirlpool and the Holy Spirit's wind is shifted. Developing church growth research says that a congregation and pastor need perhaps 20 years of patient commitment to run serious whitewater together, getting soaked, perhaps even dumping, then learning to mix and match strokes to negotiate the rocks and swifts better as bigger, more threatening challenges develop further downstream — all the while developing crucial trusting relationships.

So where are Canal Street and pastor now? Somewhere downstream after a long, exciting push-off, having run some rapids of staff changes and development well, pulling a growing number of lone and sinking swimmers into the boat, bumping painfully, but constructively into some of the rocks of bad habits — and so far successfully dislodging them. Many of the crew — members, pastor, council — have begun trustingly and openly to discuss disagreements about courses to follow downstream by scouting ahead, anticipating dangers, looking for safe, fast water — praying a lot before shooting rapids, celebrating more when swimmers are rescued and hanging on to Jesus tighter than ever before.

James C. Dekker, pastor of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ontario, paddled canoes in several rivers and lakes this past summer and realized again that sometimes working in church leadership is like running Class 3 rapids — always interesting, usually fun, sometimes dangerous.

Women

BuildingTrust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Why and how I teach Women's Studies

The International Institute for Christian Studies (IICS) is an American-based organization in Kansas City which aims to recruit Christian professors to teach in secular universities overseas. The Canadian arm of this organization, Christian Studies International (CSI), has recently been relocated to Edmonton. This interdenominational organization was founded in 1986. Since then many Christian professors have traveled overseas each year to teach courses in their discipline from a Christian worldview, including at least 45 professors in this coming year. The organization's vision statement says that "someday every university student in the world will have at least one instructor who will articulate and demonstrate the love and lordship of Jesus Christ for them." The mission statement further expresses the goal of the organization: "to bring glory to God and impact the world by developing godly leaders for every sector of society." IICS/CSI is the only organization in the world with the purpose of placing Christian professors in secular universities overseas. Professors raise the bulk of their salary, supporting themselves by way of donations from churches and individual supporters.

Laura Savage is a Christian professor of Women Studies who is teaching at the University of the West in Timisoara, Romania. In her summer newsletter to supporters Laura explains why and how she teaches Women's Studies from a Christian perspective. She gave permission to reprint her article in the Christian Courier.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, or e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

When presidents ... continued from page 4

study at Calvin College? Applauding a man whose words suggest that sometimes it is best to remain silent in order to avoid giving offence? That sometimes it is best not to mention the name of Jesus? That sometimes we really ought to place our light under a bushel?

As a New Testament professor at Calvin College, I urge my students never to compromise the truth of the gospel, and to faithfully follow the path of Christian discipleship regardless of the cost, knowing full well that sometimes that cost will be great. By standing to applaud the idolatrous elevation of civil religion, we deliberately substituted apparent patriotism for genuine piety; we implicitly told our graduates that sometimes compromise is not only acceptable but admirable, if only the speaker is famous enough, or powerful enough, or appealing enough, or the publicity expansive enough.

I know that some will challenge the implication that every address needs to be explicitly Christian. But isn't the purpose of

Laura L. Savage Ed.D.

The field of Women's Studies is often unknown, misunderstood, or disliked among evangelicals. This academic discipline really developed as a result of the women's movement in the US in the late 60s and early 70s. Because of that timing, many equate the subject area of Women's Studies with "women's lib" and other issues vocalized loudly by the radical feminists of an earlier era. While those issues are definitely part of Women's Studies, along with some of the more controversial subjects of abortion, and gay and lesbian studies, those are not the only subjects explored in the academic discipline. Other subjects discussed are gender issues in the workplace, the portrayal of beauty in the media, eating disorders among young women, the plight of women in developing countries, the AIDS pandemic, sex trafficking, women's issues in Islamic countries, and the accomplishments of women throughout time. My personal favorite is the history of American feminism.

Women's Studies as a whole seeks to make women the subject rather than the object, regardless of the topic at hand. For example, when you study history, do you read about women as the history makers (subjects) or as bystanders in history (objects)? Unfortunately, in many textbooks, women are hardly mentioned at all. Ideally, Women's Studies seeks to bring balance to any curriculum, providing both a woman's perspective and a man's perspective on the subject matter — as well as different racial and class perspectives. I try to help my students learn to ask the question of any text, what were the women doing? If they do not find the answer, that text is only providing part of the story.

I teach Women's Studies because God convicted me a number of years ago while I was working for Women's Missionary Union. God helped me see that even though my mes-

sage to women across the country was that Jesus wanted to reach all women, there were some women with whom I could not carry on a conversation because of my own judgmental attitude. At that point, God called me to pursue a master's degree in a secular Women's Studies program. My experience could not have been more positive, much to my surprise. I was humbled in many ways by what I did not know about women's history. And I grew more compassionate towards certain experiences of women that I had previously viewed more with a condemning spirit.

In my Women's Studies degree program I learned that American feminism began back in the 1830s with strong Christian women who based their beliefs in the equality of the sexes and races on the teachings of Christ and they used the Bible throughout their writings and speeches as a political tool. I could relate to their biblical worldview. Teaching about these women opens many doors for the gospel with my students.

I now teach a course entitled "Feminisms and Feminists" where I introduce my students to the many varieties of feminism, including evangelical Christian feminism, and I let them read from the Bible the same verses these early American feminists used in their teachings. I believe that if I can simply expose my students to the truth and the source of that truth, then the Holy Spirit can continue to work in their hearts and minds. I am careful not to use my lectern as a pulpit, but I can talk about faith issues and the religious experiences of these historical women as the motivation for their actions. This approach naturally brings up spiritual conversations outside the classroom. It is very exciting!

I want my students to understand how their faith or lack of faith affects the way

they view the world. I get to talk about how wonderfully Jesus treated women. An issue within feminism today is how different churches view women. I try to help separate Jesus' perfect plan from the way imperfect people try to run the church today. I want them to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to understand the difference between a relationship and a ritual.

One of the ways I get to know my students is by asking them questions at the beginning of each class. These questions are more personal than academic. While one of the purposes for these questions is to get them to hear themselves speak out loud in English, the other purpose is to help me learn their names and to get to know them. For example, I may ask them how many brothers and sisters they have or where they would want to go on a dream vacation. During Thanksgiving week, which is an American holiday they are curious about, I ask them what they are most thankful for and I also answer the question. My answer is, "I am most thankful for my personal relationship with Jesus Christ and it is because of his love for me that I came to Romania to love university students." I don't preach to my students in the classroom, but I let it be known that I am a person of faith who is willing to talk about it. Such simple statements have generated more spiritual conversations with my students in Romania that I ever imagined possible!

Teaching Women's Studies in a former communist country where women are still oppressed in many ways is a privilege indeed. To introduce my students to the fact that life can be fulfilling as a single woman, that singleness can be celibate and joyful, and that each of our lives does have a God-ordained purpose is a job description I wouldn't trade!

a commencement speech to underscore the college's mission? To remind us all about why we are gathered together in the first place? Or is commencement a commodity to be offered up to whatever public figure promises the greatest publicity and the largest fund-raising potential? What price should we pay for our chance "to be put on the map"?

The constraints of public office mean that it will be a rare President indeed who proclaims explicitly Christian advice on how service to the Lord Jesus can direct a college graduate's future into the proper service of our world. Yet, this is what our graduates require; more than that, this is what they deserve. This is precisely what they did not receive on graduation day.

The challenge of remaining Reformed

The roots of our church heritage penetrate the fertile soil of the Protestant Reformation, a movement defined by reform and the need to protest any status quo that hinders the ad-

vance of Christ's good news. True reformers provide a uniform rebuke to the principalities and powers of their age, whatever form they may take. Today the church must stand and proclaim this rebuke to all purveyors of American, civil religion, as well as any and all Politicizers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (whatever their nationalities).

The Father has entrusted us with the truth of his one and only Son, an eternal word that never allows compromise with either the crippling encrustation of politics or the anemia of mere patriotism. Jesus insists,

"My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). God's saints are honored because "they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on this earth.... They were longing, instead, for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13-16).

This is not a call to be so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good, as some may think. Rather, it is a reminder that only the heavenly minded can be of any earthly good in this fallen world.

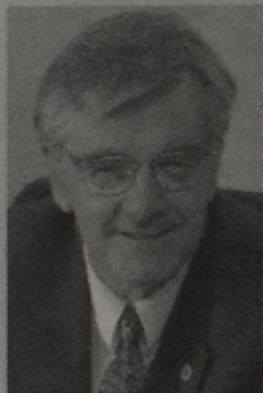
They that are too inquisitive about what other men say of them, disquiet themselves; for that which others would but whisper, they publish.

We must not jealously suspect, not too bitterly condemn, not too peremptorily conclude that whatever is not done as we would have done it, or as we have seen it done in former times is not well done.

John Donne

Classifieds

Christian Studies International appoints new executive director



Christian Studies International (CSI), a Canadian non-profit organization that sponsors Christian professors to teach at secular universities overseas, has recently appointed Dr. Henk Van Andel as its new Executive Director. Dr. Van Andel takes over from Dr. Robert Vandervennen, who held the post for the past eight years.

Dr. Van Andel, who recently retired from his position as President of The King's University College in Edmonton, will administer the program of CSI. This will include recruiting and supporting Canadian professors overseas, assisting in raising funds for their support, and raising awareness of CSI's program in the Christian community.

"Christian Studies International is very pleased to make this appointment", said Fred Reinders, Chair of the Board of CSI. "Dr. Van Andel brings a wealth of experience in Christian higher education to the position, and the CSI Board looks forward to working with him to expand the organization's programs and increase its overseas academic staff".

By strategically placing Christian professors in developing countries or countries where the gospel has been suppressed in recent years, CSI aims to expose students in these countries to a Christian worldview, equipping them to develop into Christian leaders for all aspects of society. CSI is the Canadian affiliate of the International Institute for Christian Studies (IICS) in the US. Together CSI and IICS sponsor over 40 professors overseas, including four Canadians.

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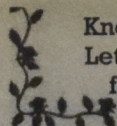
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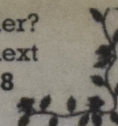
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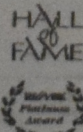
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Classifieds

Anniversaries



October 6, 1955 - 2005
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and **50 Years of Marriage!**
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Love from Carrie & Ralph, Irene & Robert
Martha & George, Abe & Debbie
Art & Louise, Eric & Hazel
and all your grandchildren.

We will be celebrating this special occasion
with an **Open House**
Saturday October 8, 2005
2:30 - 5:00 p.m. D.V.
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Correspondence: RR#2, Clifford ON N0G 1M0

1955 October 29 2005
Holland Marsh Cameron

Ps. 27:14b *Wait on the LORD*

With praise to God

CLARENCE AND TRUDY SNYDER
nee Engelage

hope to celebrate their
50th Wedding Anniversary
with children, grand & great-grandchildren
Open House on Oct. 29, 2005
from 2 - 5 p.m. at
Lindsay C.R.C.
206 Angeline St N, Lindsay Ont.

Home Address: 733 Chambers Rd RR1
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With gratitude to the LORD
Our parents celebrated their
55th Wedding Anniversary

**JAKE AND JEAN FEENSTRA**
August 30, 2005

With love and best wishes
and God's blessing to you
from your family.

With thanksgiving and praise to our LORD

GERBEN AND ANNE DEJONG (nee Hienstra)

will be celebrating the LORD willing
their **40th Wedding Anniversary** Sat. Oct. 1st.

Their children: Garry & Jamie
Mark
Rod & Nancy
Chris & Amy
and 11 grandchildren

Please join us to celebrate
at an **Open House** at
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Best Wishes only please

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October 15, 2005

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In celebration of their **50th Wedding Anniversary**

October 14, 1955 - 2005



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Best wishes only please

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Obituaries

GRIETJE (Greta) KIERS, nee WESTERHOF

Gone to be with her Lord, she passed away
peacefully with her family at her side, on Saturday,
August 20, 2005 in her 86th year.

Greta has joined her husband, Rudy, who
passed away March 7, 2005.

Dear mother of Roelina & John Horton, and
their children Jennifer and Robin; Rose & Chuck
Sider and their children Kevin, Tammy and Sandra;
Al & Grace Kiers and their children Jacquelyn,
Erin and Michael.

Beloved sister of the late Hendrik Westerhof,
Coba Dekker, Rika Meeboer, Tina Sawyer,
Gerit and Judy Westerhof. Sadly missed by
many nieces and nephews, in-laws and friends.

Many thanks to the staff and her friends at
Henley House, St. Catharines, Ontario.

The funeral service was held at Maranatha Chris-
tian Reformed Church, St. Catharines on August
23, 2005 with Pastor Walt Vanderwerf officiating.

Appelscha, The Netherlands Brampton, Ontario
February 17, 1922 August 17, 2005

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on
what is not seen. For what is seen is temporary
but what is unseen is eternal.* 2 Corinthians 4:18

JETSKE NUMAN nee LAMSMA

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Ida & Bert, *Ripley*
John & Ruth, *New Hamburg*
Mary & Bill, *Ripley*
Teena, *Fonthill*

Oma will be missed by her
grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held August 22, 2005 in
Community Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener,
Pastor Rev. Bernard De Jong officiating.

Correspondence: R. Numan
7900 McLaughlin Rd S HT 213
Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

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Her parents: Bill & Maryke Boonstra of Caledonia, Ontario
Her children: Rebecca (Frank) Zimmerman,
Matthias & Bethany of Creston BC;
Deborah (Brad) Jarvis of Langley, BC;
Rob Ouwehand of Seoul, S. Korea; and
Daniel (Caryn) Ouwehand of Red Deer, AB.

Her siblings: Greta (Peter) Goodwin, Hamilton, ON;
Al (Gail) Boonstra, Frankford, ON; Dave (Julie)
Boonstra, Libya; and Kathy Boonstra, York, ON.

Romans 8:1; *Therefore, there is now no
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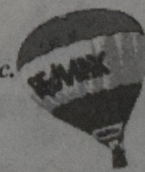
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News

As Israel leaves Gaza, will militants lay down their guns?

Ilene R. Prusher

JABALYA REFUGEE CAMP, GAZA—Not yet 30 and already boasting three years of experience in the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Raed Abu Faddak is wondering whether he will soon have to find a new occupation.

After quitting college and then working in a textile factory in Israel, Mr. Abu Faddak joined Al Aqsa, one of many groups that sprang up around the intifada when it began five years ago this month after Israeli-Palestinian peace talks broke down.

"If there's no Israeli occupation, there is no need for resistance," says Abu Faddak, dressed in military gear that, judging from the Hebrew inside his khaki flak jacket, was stolen from the Israeli army. "If they leave Gaza, we won't fight from Gaza. But if they're still in Ramallah, there will be resistance in Ramallah."

Just as Israeli struggled against Israeli as part of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's withdrawal plan, to be completed next week, Palestinian is now facing Palestinian in a tug of war over what comes next.

While some, like Abu Faddak (whose name may be a pseudonym), think that Palestinians should stop attacking Israel from Gaza if Israel completely reverses its 38-year occupation here, other militant groups, including Hamas, say the struggle should continue.

Moreover, the proliferation of militant groups alongside a weak Palestinian Authority (PA) means that during the transition—in which Palestinians stand to gain 21 former Israeli settlements—some ambitious groups are seizing the opportunity to stake their claim in the new Gaza.

The assassination Sept. 7 of Mousa Arafat, a cousin of the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, some here say, was an attempt by some groups to force the rule of the gun over the rule of law.

"Now, instead of looking for an apartment and a job and security, these [militants'] expectations and ambitions have increased. They are trying to get a bigger piece of the cake," says Ziad Abu Amr, a Gaza City representative to the Palestinian legislative council and author of several books on Islamic militants in Gaza. "The PA seems to be paralyzed and unable to establish the rule of law, so they figure they can get away with things and get concessions."

One solution, says Dr. Abu Amr, is to coax the different factions into a dialogue with the PA. This would bring them into a process of national

goal-setting for possible Palestinian statehood. "The challenge is not coming from the factions which are engaged in a dialogue with the PA, Hamas included," he says. "These started as groups with grievances, and now they are becoming more and more autonomous and gaining more power."

Indeed, one of those grievances was corruption, and many of the young militants viewed Arafat's assassination as a symbolic comeuppance for a whole array of misdeeds within the PA. Abu Faddak, for one, hoped it would be a warning sign to the PA.

"An important figure and symbol of corruption has been executed, but he should have been brought to a real trial. The Palestinian law should have taken its place on this issue," he says. "In the last two years, we ran many demonstrations in the streets demanding President Arafat to fire this man. I hope this will provoke the PA to start working on corruption."

Militants in new Gaza

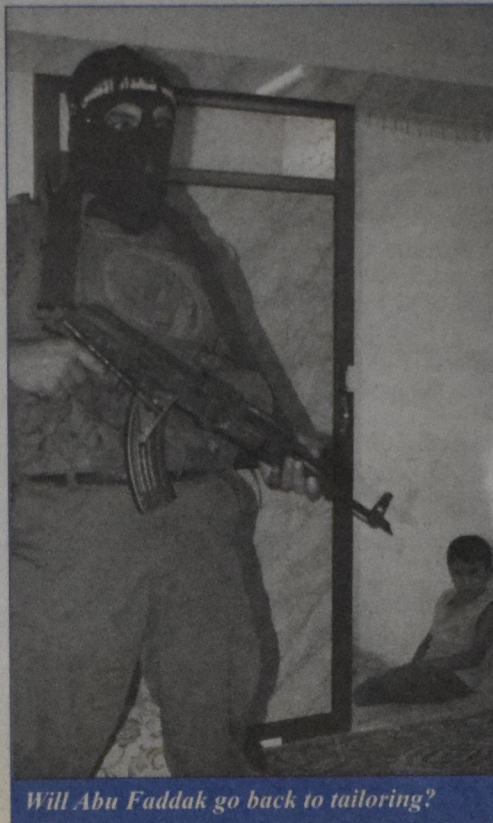
Abu Faddak rearranges his Kalashnikov at his side and gives visitors to his home an explanation of everything splayed out across his coffee table. On it sit cups of tea, lemon-lime soda, grenades, and several sets of ignition switches that can be used to detonate a remote bomb. A child sits in the doorway to watch.

The mix of practical and tactical sums up the conflicting currents coursing through the heightened tensions here.

Some militants are looking at the possibility that, if Israel's withdrawal from Gaza is total, they will be under pressure to put down their guns and pick up civilian work. Others are viewing the edge of lawlessness on which the PA is perched, along with Mr. Abbas's tenuous control, and looking to capitalize on the power vacuum.

Abu Faddak, for his part, says he hopes the PA will bring groups like his under one military tent by absorbing them into its security and police forces. If not, he says, he might go back to tailoring, which would allow him to be home at night with his wife and two children—instead of on missions against the Israeli army.

Israel's withdrawal makes it pos-



Will Abu Faddak go back to tailoring?

sible that the *raison d'être* for these groups—fighting Israeli occupation—will disappear. But on the question of whether to lay down arms, Abu Faddak says, he does not look to Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, for leadership.

"Abu Mazen is always angry with the resistance," Abu Faddak says. "He doesn't agree with resistance in general. He's a politician who believes in peaceful means only, but Arafat left the doors open. We don't care about what Abu Mazen says. He didn't give us the orders to fight."

The Palestinian leader, who inherited an already weak authority after Arafat's death last November, is left struggling to satisfy the demands of his own people while cooperating with Israel to maximize the peace dividends of the pullout.

The Palestinian view

Palestinian opinion polls underline the environment of uncertainty. While 72 percent of Palestinians view the pullout as a victory for armed resistance, about two-thirds oppose the continuation of armed attacks against Israelis from Gaza if the Israeli withdrawal is complete.

Al-Quds, a Palestinian daily, reported that the PA would wait a month until after the Israeli withdrawal is complete to "tackle the issue of the weapons of resistance." That tough task is being pushed by Israel as a way to show that Abbas is doing his part alongside disengagement.

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News briefs

Peter Newman, a Canadian journalist of stature has just published a book about former P.M. Brian Mulroney that one reviewer called neither hagiography nor biography. Apparently Newman befriended Mulroney and recorded (with permission) many hours of chatter, gossip and venting as well as the usual information. Newman didn't use the conversations to write a biography but to expose his "friend" with his pants down, so to speak.

I guess the moral is, Never trust a writer. Friendship doesn't mean a thing in the pursuit of fame and fortune.

Undoubtedly the publishers figured a gossip book would sell better than a biography. From the published excerpts one is tempted to conclude that it does credit to no one—not to Mulroney nor to Peter Newman. Publishers really don't have much of a reputation to uphold; they'll publish anything likely to make money.

Poor Brian. Betrayed once more. Looking forward to having his name inscribed in history by one of Canada's premier journalists, one who has recognized his greatness, he gets instead peekaboo journalism.

Pascal and global warming

Mulroney bet on his friend Newman. Andy Crouch of *Christianity Today* wants us to bet on global warming. He cites Pascal's wager. Pascal said something like: Even if the proofs of God's existence don't seem convincing, you can safely bet on it. If he doesn't exist, you've lost nothing; if he does, you've gained everything.

Applied to global warming, it goes like this: Even if we concede it's only a theory, act as if it's true. If it is, we gain; if it isn't, we lose nothing.

But is that true? Suppose that approach had been used with every new technology or venture. Almost every discovery has had bad side-effects, from the use of fire to the invention of flying machines, from plowing the soil to fishing the seas.

This sort of wager—if it poses risks to the environment, don't do it—would have frozen human history at the level of hunter-gatherers.

Why we should have to wager on global warming escapes me. The theory seems by now to be about as certain as any scientific theory can be. But you don't stake everything on it as you can on the love of God.

We're all terrorists now

Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad called the U.S. and the U.K. "terrorist nations." So the pilots who flew the planes and dropped the bombs are war criminals. Good thing the International Criminal Court isn't located in Malaysia.

Amazing how quickly some terms blubber out beyond all boundaries. Once "abuse" meant something specific, but it wasn't long before it was applied to anything that isn't politically correct—even to traditional ways of raising children. Once "racism" had a limited meaning, but now its usage is so broad, it even applies to the collection of statistics. More and more we see terrorism being applied to any use of military force.

"War itself is the most extreme form of terrorism," declared Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States* and a peace activist. The statement is used to advertise for the left-wing magazine *The Progressive*.

Doesn't that makes all of us terrorists? In a democracy who is ultimately responsible for the acts of its government and its military but the voters. And if everyone is a terrorist, no one can be singled out any longer. Blubber words rob us of the power to make distinctions.

All making of distinctions, we are led to believe, is nothing but politics.